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## THESIS

**BEIJING AND THE 1961 PRC-DPRK SECURITY TREATY**

by

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December 2010

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This thesis addresses the continuation of PRC-North Korean alliance even though significant changes have emerged in international security environment. Numerous studies have focused on the decreased strategic value of North Korea with respect to Chinese national interests, but Pyongyang still serves as stepping stone for China to expand its leverage. China's national objectives of maintaining its leverage in Northeast Asia indicates that Beijing will maintain the 1961 alliance to assure its security interests.

By examining the formation of PRC-DPRK alliance, this thesis assesses the characteristics of their alliance and analyzes the evolution in Beijing's approach to Pyongyang by explaining how transitions in the security environment have affected their alliance. This thesis concludes that, for China, the rationale for maintaining the PRC-DPRK alliance is to guarantee China's national interests, not to sustain its traditional "sealed in blood" relationship.

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**BELJING AND THE 1961 PRC-DPRK SECURITY TREATY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE

In July 1961, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) signed a "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance." The treaty established a security alliance, often described by both capitals as a relationship as close as "lips and teeth," that committed each side to mutual defense in case of attack. From then on, the Chinese-North Korean alliance became an important axis in the dynamic of Northeast Asian security relations.

However, considering the PRC's entry into the international order as an accepted sovereign state in the early 1970s and its domestic development policies of "reform and opening" under Deng Xiaoping, China's approach to the Korean peninsula has evolved. In particular, with the end of the Cold War and China's establishment of diplomatic relations with and its rapidly growing economic ties with the Republic of Korea (ROK), it seems appropriate to re-examine Beijing's commitment to the 1961 alliance with Pyongyang. Several strains have caused cracks in their relationship, and in significant respects PRC support of the DPRK, which is a country that threatens the stability of the Northeast Asian region, has become a huge burden on Beijing.

Nevertheless, Beijing and Pyongyang have not renounced their alliance. This fact raises several questions. What is the reason for their continued alliance? How does the 1961 alliance figure into Beijing's continuing support for the DPRK politically, economically and militarily? The purpose of this thesis is to assess the PRC's view of the alliance in lieu of the dramatic changes in the respective international environment and domestic evolution in each country.

Numerous studies have attempted to analyze the relevant factors that sustain the alliance between the PRC and DPRK. However, despite the significance of the topic, research has been impeded by the limitations on and difficulties in gaining to relevant materials. Existing studies only focused on historical description and offer only fragmentary analysis and evaluation.

In addition, the alliance theory, which argues that alliances will be altered or dropped altogether when a nation's relationship and environment change, cannot adequately explain the realities of the PRC-DPRK alliance. This thesis hypothesizes that the PRC-DPRK alliance is based not solely on the traditional relationship of two countries, but also more centrally on the PRC's national security objectives and ambition to expand its external influence. In particular, this thesis will focus on the PRC's foreign policy, with the variable of shift in the PRC's domestic priorities and the transition in the PRC's international security environment.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the PRC, led by Deng Xiaoping, launched a series of major reforms. In addition, Beijing sought to improve relationships with neighboring countries. As a result, Beijing signed a peace treaty with Tokyo in 1978 despite the historical dispute between the two countries, normalized diplomatic relations with Washington in 1979, restored friendly relations with the Soviet Union in 1989, and officially recognized Seoul in 1992. These steps made Pyongyang uncomfortable, but, they did not mean the end of the relationship between the two countries. They did underscore, however, that the relationship between the two countries is vulnerable to changing national interest needs, especially with regard to the PRC.

In some significant sense, the PRC alliance with the DPRK continues to serve Chinese domestic and external interests and helps it to achieve its objectives. By maintaining its alliance with the DPRK, the PRC can enhance its influence in the Northeast Asian region and use the alliance to moderate the DPRK's provocations that threaten the security of Northeast Asian region. Beijing thereby can improve the stability of security conditions on its border, which it needs for its continuing economic development.

Therefore, the main hypothesis examined in this thesis is that the PRC-DPRK alliance continues to be valid on the grounds that it continues to be useful to the PRC and serves its fundamental interests.

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<sup>1</sup> Shen Dingli, "North Korea's Strategic significance to China," *China Security*, (Autumn 2006): 26–27.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Assessment of the continuing validity of the PRC-DPRK alliance is important for the following reasons. First of all, in the Northeast Asian region, the PRC-DPRK alliance has significant influence on regional stability, largely because the PRC is one of the few countries that can directly communicate with Pyongyang.<sup>2</sup> Second, in Seoul's view, the validity of the alliance between the PRC and DPRK plays a role in ROK's unification strategy, as well as its policy toward the DPRK. In that regard, Seoul must take into account not only the interests of the United States but also those of the PRC. In that assessment, the strength of Beijing's commitments to Pyongyang must also be weighed. For example, with respect to the process of investigating the recent sinking of the ROK's naval vessel Cheonan, the high-level PRC-DPRK summit in Beijing in early May negatively affected any attempt to enlist the PRC's cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, understanding the interests that lead the PRC to maintain its alliance with the DPRK may help the ROK, as well as other countries engaged on the Korean peninsula, to take appropriate measures to address their interests.

## **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Two bodies of literature are introduced in this section. Research on diverse existing studies about the PRC-DPRK Alliance provides recent approach toward the 1961 alliance treaty based on changes in international politics. Research on theories of alliances supplies potential explanations for the China's necessity of maintaining alliance with North Korea in terms of national interests.

### **1. Existing Studies About the PRC-DPRK Alliance**

Recent studies assessing the 1961 alliance focus on the structural and motivational changes in the Sino-DPRK relationship in the context of the North Korea

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher P. Twomey, "China Policy toward North Korea and its implications for the United States: Balancing Competing Concerns," *Strategic Insights* 5, no. 7 (September 2006), <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccp/publications/OnlineJournal/2006/Sep/twomeySep06.pdf>, (accessed October 1, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Yusik Choi, "International Perspective toward Result of 'Cheonan' Investigation," *Chosun Ilbo*, May 24, 2010, [http://www.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2010/05/23/2010052301099.html](http://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/05/23/2010052301099.html), (accessed September 12, 2010).

nuclear crises of the early 1990s and since 2002. Most scholars argue that the PRC-DPRK alliance has evolved from the “sealed in blood” relationship of the 1960s into a looser alliance.<sup>4</sup> Andrew Scobell argued that the PRC-DPRK alliance is only a virtual alliance because the relationship between two countries had been weakened by China’s policy shifts, such as opening its economy and the establishment of its relationship with the ROK.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the relationship between the PRC and DPRK was strained further after North Korea’s nuclear test in 2006. Not only that, some scholars have speculated that Beijing may ignore its commitments to Pyongyang by entering a “grand bargain” with Washington in the matter of North Korea and so break the Sino-DPRK alliance.<sup>6</sup>

Other research concludes that the PRC puts a higher emphasis on the relationship with South Korea than with North Korea. Such studies have a tendency to simplify China’s policy, focusing on a principle of separating of economy and politics. Therefore, such analysis overlooks the complex, intertwined national interest that derives from relationships with surrounding countries while concentrating on economic interest. As a result, they oversimplify the PRC-DPRK relationship.<sup>7</sup>

However, these studies are not persuasive in explaining the continuing PRC-DPRK alliance. For example, considering that since 1994 China has annually provided large amounts of fuel and food aid, which served as a lifeline to North Korea, the

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Scobell, *China and North Korea: From Comrades-in-Arms to Allies at Arm's Length* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004); Andrew Scobell, “China and North Korea: the Limits of Influence,” *Current History* 102, no. 665 (September 2003); Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, “The Korea Crisis,” *Foreign Policy* (May/June 2003); Jian Yang, “China and North Korea: Old Friend, New Challenges,” *NZ International Review* (May / June 2003); Chen Jian, “limits of the ‘lips and Teeth’ alliance: An historical Review of Chinese-North Korean Relations,” *Asia Program Special Report*, no. 115, *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars* (September 2003); Samuel S. Kim, “China and North Korea in a changing World,” *Asia Program Special Report*, no 115, *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars* (September 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Scobell, “China and North Korea: The Limits of Influence,” *Current History* 102, no. 665 (September 2003): 277.

<sup>6</sup> An Inhae, “Present state and prospective of China’s policy toward North Korea,” *the Annual Academic Conference, Korea International Politics Institute* (December, 2006): 53-55. “Big Deal” means cooperation scenario between China and the U.S regarding matter of Taiwan and North Korea.

<sup>7</sup> Li Dan, “Changes of DPRK-China Relationship and its Durability” (PhD. diss., Chonnam University, 2003), 5–6.

relationship is not a routine one.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, even though China agreed to the sanctions against the DPRK by UN Security Council imposed on North Korea after its nuclear testing in 2006, it also tried to ease the impact on North Korea that arose from international regulation by opposing military restrictions on the DPRK.

Therefore, the PRC-DPRK alliance is something more than a routine relationship. From a broad prospective, their relationship appears to have strengthened since the 1990s because China are still interested in using North Korea as a politically and militarily strategic area for its national security interests in Asia.

## 2. Existing IR Theories of Alliance

### a. Power-Based Theory

When it comes to alliance, realists agree that alliance formation is shaped by power competence between the great powers. Due to characteristics of international politics as anarchy, every state works harder to increase its own strength, or it combines with others, if it is falling behind.<sup>9</sup> States in the international system also aim to guarantee their own survival. Because other states are potential threats and because there is no higher authority to come to their rescue when they are put in the danger, each state tends to maintain the balance of power for its survival.<sup>10</sup> Balance means tangible equilibrium of military capability among the dominated countries that deters one country from establishing dominance. According to Kenneth Waltz, who wrote a *Theory of International Politics*, “balancing” means states join alliances to protect themselves from states or coalitions whose superior resources could pose a threat. States will choose to balance for two main reasons. First, states risk their own survival if they fail to curb a potential hegemony before it becomes too strong. To ally with the dominant power means placing one’s trust in its continued benevolence.<sup>11</sup> Second, joining the more vulnerable

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<sup>8</sup> David Shambaugh, “China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the long term,” *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 46.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 126.

<sup>10</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *the Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 32–33.

<sup>11</sup> Keith L. Shimko, *International Relations: Perspectives and Controversies* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 71.

side increases the new member's influence, because the weaker side has greater need for assistance. Joining the stronger side, by contrast, reduces the new member's influence and leaves it vulnerable to the whims of its new partners. Alignment with the weaker side is thus the preferred choice.<sup>12</sup> Bandwagoning is aligning with the threatening state or coalition. By doing so, the bandwagoner may hope to avoid an attack on himself by diverting it elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> Waltz argues that balancing is more common than bandwagoning, when states are more secure, because aggressors will face combined opposition.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it is safer to balance against potential threats than to hope that strong states will remain benevolent.<sup>15</sup>

Other significant assertions regarding balance of power in alliance formation are found in Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* and Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*. In these books, the authors argue that alliances are often formed based on the "function of preserving the status quo"<sup>16</sup> and balance of power logic often causes great powers to form alliances and cooperate against common enemies.<sup>17</sup>

According to balance of power logic, states attempt to transform their alliance depending on national interests. Thus, a typical alliance is imbedded in a dynamic field of diverse interests and purposes. Namely, the value and the chances of an alliance must be considered in the context of the overall policies within which it is expected to operate. General alliances are typically of temporary duration and most prevalent. For this reason, when power is unbalanced, such circumstance stimulates states to maintain and form alliances to balance. That is, as Barry Hughes explains, when

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<sup>12</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (July, 1985): 5–6.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>14</sup> Stephan M. Walt, *The Origin of Alliance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Waltz, "Alliance Formation," 15.

<sup>16</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 43.

<sup>17</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 52–53.

opposition power weakens, old disagreements among alliance partner will resurface, causing either dissension in the alliance or coalition breakdown as in case of United States and USSR after WW II.<sup>18</sup>

However, the fact that PRC-DPRK alliance continues to be evaluated as a firm alliance—even though no other power threatens both allies and there is no common foe opposing them—shows the limitations of balance of power theory. In actuality, the PRC-DPRK alliance was created not only by the need to defend the DPRK, but also by the need to defend the PRC in a “lips and teeth” relationship

### ***b. Threat-Based Theory***

There is another argument related to alliance formation. Walt said that “although power is an important part of the equation, it is not the only part. It is more accurate to say that states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat.”<sup>19</sup> Namely, the immediate threat that offensive capabilities pose may create a strong incentive for others to balance. In this theory, balancing and bandwagoning are more accurately viewed as a response to threats. It is important to consider other factors that will affect the level of threat that states may pose.<sup>20</sup>

Waltz argues that the alliance choices are decided by a degree of potential threat, which is evaluated by the opposition’s “aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capability, and the perceived intentions.” Waltz redefines balancing as “allying in opposition to the principal source of danger,” and bandwagoning as “allying with the state that poses the major threat.”<sup>21</sup> In such threat-based alliance theory, when states recognize more threat from other states, they are willing to ally with the strongest state. In other words, alliances form when states perceive threats from their enemies.

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<sup>18</sup> Barry B. Hughes, *Continuity and Change in World Politics: Competing Perspectives* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1997), 127.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *the Origin of Alliance* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 21.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance: Balancing and Bandwagoning,” in *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, eds., Robert J Art and Robert Jervis (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2002), 98.

<sup>21</sup> Waltz, “Alliance Formation,” 4.

However, this theory does not explain why the PRC and DPRK maintain their alliance. This is because Beijing's motive for the existing alliance between these two countries is not threats from the U.S-ROK alliance, but the desire to make a stable security environment for the PRC.

*c. Self-Interest-Based Theory*

Realists posit that states are the key actors in world politics. They further argue that states pursue key interests; realists claim that those interests provide the only legitimate basis for state action. Balance of power and balance of threat theories are criticized due to these theories failing to provide appropriate explanation for a nation's self-interests.<sup>22</sup>

George Liska proposes that alliances aim at maximizing gains and sharing liabilities and all association depends on the existence of identical interests. Therefore, in terms of internal and international security interests, states are directly acting based on their self-interests when they form alliances.<sup>23</sup> In addition, states choose allying in order to accomplish specific security goals more easily. In other words, the aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted. Simply put, "balancing is driven by the desire to avoid losses; bandwagoning by the opportunity for gain," as Schweller remarks.<sup>24</sup>

The distribution of benefits is likely to reflect the distribution of power within an alliance, as does the determination of policies. A great power has a good chance to have its way with a weak ally as concerns benefits and policies. A weak nation may be able to exploit its relations with a strong ally by committing the latter to the support of its vital interests, which may mean nothing to the strong ally or may even run counter to its interests. The relationship between the United States and ROK exemplifies

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<sup>22</sup> Barry B. Hughes, *Continuity and Change*, 76–78.

<sup>23</sup> George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: the Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 29–30.

<sup>24</sup> Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back in," *International Security* 19 (Summer 1994): 74.

this situation.<sup>25</sup> Namely, some states are willing to give up their sovereignty to preserve security by allying with a strong state, while other states are willing to give up security to preserve sovereignty by allying with weak state.<sup>26</sup>

Michael Barnett and Jack Levy also find that realism is “relatively silent concerning Third World alliances in general or how state-society relations in particular might give rise to distinctive patterns of alignment behavior.” They stress the resource-providing function of alliances and the impact on the domestic political economy. They conclude that Third World leaders form alliances “to secure urgently needed economic and military resources to promote domestic goals.”<sup>27</sup>

Snyder also argues that states form or join alliances if the benefits of doing so are greater than the costs. The benefits are counted chiefly in terms of the increased security resulting from the partner’s commitment, and the costs largely in terms of the autonomy sacrificed in the commitment to the partner. Snyder suggests security benefits of alliance, including deterrence of attack, capability for defense against attack, deterrence of attack on the ally, preclusion of alliance or alignment between the partner and the opponent, and increased control or influence over the allied state.<sup>28</sup> He notes the risk of having to come to the aid of the ally, the risk of entrapment in war by the ally, the risk of a counter-alliance, and foreclosure of alternative alliance options, and general constraints on freedom of action, as the principal costs of alliance.<sup>29</sup> In interest-based theories, alliance is decided by how allies increase their interests more than the costs they pay. Therefore, allies make an effort to keep the alliance valid by increasing their self-interests in the context of alliance.

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<sup>25</sup> Arnold Wolfers, *Alliance policy in the cold war* (Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), 190.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and James D. Morrow, “Sorting through the Wealth of Notions,” *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 61.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Barnett and Jack Levy, “Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt,” *International Organization* 45, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 369–379.

<sup>28</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 43–44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

This thesis assesses the utility of these international relations theories in explaining the continuing value of the PRC-DPRK security alliance for Beijing

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

This research attempts to discover the reasons why the PRC-DPRK alliance is still valid from the perspective of the PRC, despite transitions in international political environment. As previously mentioned, the main hypothesis to be examined in the thesis is that the PRC and DPRK alliance is valid because the PRC's national interests can be achieved efficiently through continued alliance with the DPRK.

To test this hypothesis, the thesis sets up the transitions in international political environment and Beijing's political, economic policies as independent variables, and the validity of the alliance as dependent variable. This is because these factors play a significant role in causing conflict and cooperation between two countries. For example, the end of Cold War and establishment of diplomatic relations with Seoul becomes a new start in the Sino-DPRK relations. Not only that, it also means a change and adjustment of Sino-DPRK relations. To investigate what changes were caused and how these changes affected the PRC's foreign policy, it is important to understand the validity of the alliance. Therefore, this thesis will suggest important effects in order to find the reason why the PRC maintains the alliance with the DPRK.

In addition, after the end of Cold War, the PRC became the only country that supports the DPRK. While the PRC saw a reduced need for an alliance with the DPRK, the DPRK's need for alliance intensified. Therefore, this thesis puts a higher emphasis on the PRC's policies on foreign relations as core independent variables than those of the DPRK.

Also, the PRC has improved relations with surrounding countries to create the stable security environment needed for pursuit of economic growth, even though it negatively affected relations with the DPRK. On the other hand, Beijing wants to maintain "status quo" in the Northeast Asian region in order to achieve its security aims. Exploring transitions in international security environment and the PRC's foreign policies

will help shed light on why the PRC-DPRK alliance is still valid. Because such transitions have caused diverse changes in two countries relations, however, they also create need for continued DPRK alliance for the PRC.

For these reasons, the PRC-DPRK alliance in this thesis is measured in two dimensions: (1) the level of international environment; and (2) the implications for the PRC's political and economic policies. This study considers an agreement from a high-level summit between two countries in order to find out the alliance's changing mutual perception. Also, the thesis analyzes statistical data from China and Korea, such as periodic reports of national newspapers' about the alliance, governmental statements and Chinese and foreign analysts' comments, which can serve as useful tools to explain cooperation and conflict between two countries. This thesis also explores some previous studies about the PRC-DPRK alliance, since some of them are useful in distinguishing distinct characteristics of the PRC-DPRK alliance.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter has briefly explained the research questions and methodology and overviewed existing studies evaluating the PRC-DPRK alliance. The second chapter examines the establishment of the Sino-DPRK alliance in order to evaluate its meaning from a historical fellowship to geopolitical importance in international environment, and then call attention to its characteristics.

The third chapter examines changes in the alliance between the two countries by focusing on transitions in international political environment, such as the end of Cold War and the PRC's "reform and opening" policy. The fourth chapter shows how despite such transitions, the value of alliance has strengthened from Beijing's standpoint. Finally, the last chapter concludes by verifying the overall causal relationship between the variables and summarizing the implications of the research.

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## **II. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRC-DPRK ALLIANCE**

In this chapter, I call attention to distinct characteristics of the PRC-DPRK alliance and take a more detailed approach to the establishment of factors of alliance. The logic of this relationship is tied to more than a half century of history China shares with the DPRK of military cooperation, socialist ideology, and anti-American views.<sup>30</sup> In the process of alliance formation, Chinese domestic politics and a specific international environment, the Cold War, served as dominant variables. In the Cold War era, Beijing and Pyongyang cooperated for reciprocal interests rather than confrontation because they shared a similar political system and considerable strategic interests in regional international relations. By analyzing the process that developed from an informal secret relationship to a formal alliance, this chapter identifies distinct characteristics of their relationship

### **A. THE PROCESS OF THE ALLIANCE FORMATION**

#### **1. Historical Background of PRC-DPRK Relationship**

The relationship between China and North Korea started from a pre-modern relationship in the seventh century BC.<sup>31</sup> China, as the cultural and political leading power of East Asia, considered other countries as dependent states. According to the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China, China considered the Korean peninsula a gate and a shield connecting with foreign powers.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, Beijing said that China and Korea were as close as “lips and teeth,” emphasizing the importance of national security.<sup>33</sup> This factor shows that China has looked upon the Korean peninsula

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<sup>30</sup> Andrew Scobell, “China and North Korea: The Close but Uncomfortable Relationship,” Current History 101 (September 2002): 278.

<sup>31</sup> “Korea-China relations,” Northeast Asian History Foundation, [http://english.historyfoundation.or.kr/?sub\\_num=20](http://english.historyfoundation.or.kr/?sub_num=20), (accessed September 30, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> News Coverage Guideline of Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China.

<sup>33</sup> The China-North Korea relationship has often been likened to that of the “Teeth and Lips”, following a Chinese idiom that says that when the lips are gone, the teeth feel frigid, Scott Zhou, “All teeth and lips for now,” Asian Times Online, October 26, 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HJ21Ad01.html>, (accessed September 30, 2010).

as an important strategic region as well as from indicator of external threat perceptions. After Japan took complete control of Korea in 1985, China was exposed to direct external threats, and Beijing realized the importance of cooperation with Korean independence movements. During the anti-Japanese war period, close military, political, economic, and cultural relations were established between the Chinese and Korean comrades.<sup>34</sup> The combined anti-Japanese armed struggles in 1900s are examples of collaboration.<sup>35</sup> Some Korean anti-Japanese forces- such as the Northeast Anti-Japanese Combined Force and the Chosun Volunteer Forces for Independence<sup>36</sup>—established a united front with Chinese. They shared the common objective of confronting Japanese imperialism and so interacted in order to fight against Japanese army. Not only that, most Korean communists supported the Chinese Communist Party from the beginning of Chinese civil war to 1949.<sup>37</sup>

Table 1. Military Cooperation Between Chinese and North Korean Revolutionaries  
From 1938 to 1949<sup>38</sup>

Yr	1938	1942	1945	1949
Organization	Chosun volunteer forces for independence	Chosun volunteer forces for independence	Alliance for independence	Anti-Japanese Guerilla front line
Military Strength	Three battalion	Unknown	6,000	Roughly 40,000

Therefore, China and North Korea established a special relationship, which was based on political and ideological sense of kinship in the period of anti-Japanese movement. Old generations of revolutionaries developed a communist brotherhood in

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<sup>34</sup> James Person, Limits of the “lips and Teeth” Alliance: New Evidence on Sino-DPRK Relations, 1955–1984 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International center for Scholars, 2009), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Sangsoon Kim, History of North Korea (Seoul: JimoonKak, 1961), 61–65; Sangkeun Lee, Changes in Chinese view toward the Unification of the Korean Peninsula, (PhD. Diss., Dankook University, 1995), 108–109.

<sup>36</sup> Sangsook Lee, “A study on the Change of North Korea-China’s Alliance,” (Master’s thesis, Dongguk University, 2001), 18.

<sup>37</sup> Dan Lee, “Changes of DPRK-China Relationship and Its Durability,” (Master’s thesis, Chonnam National University, 2003), 27–28.

<sup>38</sup> Mangil Kang, the National Revolutionary Party of Korea and the United Front (Seoul: Hwapyungsa, 1991), 238.

Sino-DPRK relations. The establishment the PRC-DPRK alliance was built on the foundation of life and bloodshed in terms of shared experience of the anti-Japanese movement during the Civil War.

## 2. Reason for the Establishment of Security Alliance

The “sealed in blood” characterization of the PRC-DPRK relationship was solidified during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. In that period, PRC struggled with domestic problems, such as reorganization of political structure, economic reconstruction and mop-up operations against the Kuomintang.<sup>39</sup> Many Chinese Communist leaders had serious reservations about and strongly opposed intervention in the Korean War. That notwithstanding, Mao decided to participate in Korean War to bolster a strategic objective securing its position in international order and concerns about an unstable security environment caused by U.S. occupation of the Korean peninsula. In particular, U.S. occupation of the Korean peninsula meant direct collision with the United States. Thus, Beijing declared that supporting North Korea was closely related to defending indispensable interests of Chinese people, according to a telegram that Mao sent to Stalin in October 2, 1950.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, China’s slogan, “Resist America and support Korea, Defend the homeland” (抗美援朝, 保家・国), illustrated Beijing’s decision as derived from bolstering its national security.<sup>41</sup>

Table 2. The PRC’s Losses in the Korean War.<sup>42</sup>

	History of The Anti-American War to Support North Korea	The American Joint Chiefs of Staff Summary	Statistics of UN
Casualties	382,500	486,995	900,000

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<sup>39</sup> Chaejin Lee, China and Korea: Dynamic relations (California: Hoover Press Publication, 1996), 7.

<sup>40</sup> Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Litai Xue, Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and Korean War (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 177.

<sup>41</sup> Taeho Park, The History of Foreign Relations of the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea, (Pyongyang: Social Science Press, 1985), 114.

<sup>42</sup> Yonghyun Ahn, The Secret History of Modern War 5 (Seoul: Kyungin, 1992), 50.

Table 3. Dispatched PLA Army in the Korean War<sup>43</sup>

	<b>Field Army Division</b>	<b>Artillery Division</b>	<b>Military Engineer Division</b>	<b>Armored Division</b>	<b>Air Force Division</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Strength</b>	25	70	25	3	12	2.3 Millions

That is, with perception of a U.S. threat, the PRC chose to establish a special “Sealed in Blood” relationship with DPRK in order to defend interests from external threats during the period of war. After war, they agreed to establish a treaty of alliance for mutual support and cooperation.

However, before they established their official alliance treaty in 1961, the PRC and DPRK maintained a *de facto* alliance without a formal treaty. They formalized this *de facto* alliance in July 1961 when Beijing and Pyongyang signed a “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.” From the PRC’s perspective, the major reason for the official alliance formation was Sino-Soviet discord. Beijing needed firm support from Pyongyang in order to get superior position in Sino-Soviet relations.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the PRC gave North Korea positive economic and military support because the DPRK’s opinion, as one of major communism countries, served as important variable that would decided which of the giant states would hold the main field in communist politics. The DPRK, throughout Sino-Soviet dispute, successfully exploited the Sino-Soviet split by playing the two communist giants off against each other. In this way, the DPRK was able to gain economic and political benefits from both its neighbors.<sup>45</sup>

In brief, the establishment of the treaty in 1961 was due to (1) secure China’s self-interest in the region and (2) seeking an advantage in competition with the Soviet Union.

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<sup>43</sup> The Chinese Academic of Social Science, Modern Chinese Military Operation Part 1(1) (Beijing: The Chinese Academic of Social Science, 1989), 577.

<sup>44</sup> Savagem Tomothy L, “China’s Policy toward North Korea,” International Journal on World Peace 20 (September 2003): 29–30.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 30.

## B. CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTION OF TREATY

### 1. Characteristics of Treaty

On July 11, 1961, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and DPRK Premier Kim Ilsung signed the “Sino-Korean Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance” in Beijing. To understand the characteristics of the treaty, the provisions of the treaty should be assessed first. Its specific features include compulsion, immediate adoption, and ideological traits. This is because it was to respond to the “Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea.” The treaty is composed of seven articles. **Implications of major Articles II, III and IV are analyzed as below.**

Article **II** emphasizes that “the contracting parties undertake jointly to adopt all measures to prevent aggression against either of the contracting parties by any state” and declares that “in the event of one of the contracting parties being subjected to the armed attack by any state, the other party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal.”<sup>46</sup> The most important element of this article is that each side will “immediately render military and other assistance by all means.” Compared to other treaties, it does not designate a specific condition and country. Namely, its purpose was to prepare a response to immediate conformity with western countries, including the United States.<sup>47</sup>

Article **III** stipulates that “neither contracting party shall conclude any alliance directed against the other contracting party or take part in any bloc or in any action or measure directed against the other contracting party.”<sup>48</sup> This article levied a huge burden on the PRC because it limited establishing unconstrained foreign relationships. After the end of Cold War, as the PRC’s desire to improve its position in international order

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<sup>46</sup> Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance Between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Article **II**, Pobzeb Vang, Five Principles of Chinese Foreign Policies (Indiana: Author House, 2008), 492.

<sup>47</sup> Yongjin Cho, “China’s Alliance Policy toward North Korea in Post Cold War era,” The Journal of International relationship (1995): 126.

<sup>48</sup> Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea article **III**, Pobzeb Vang, Five Principles, 492.

increased, Beijing was pursued an omni-directional diplomacy to address its national security interests.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, changes in circumstances and domestic political, economic requirements, necessity of treaty revision appeared. However, looking back at the history of relations between the PRC and DPRK, they externally underline friendly relations even in dissension situation. For example, when Kim Ilsung died in 1994, Jiang Zemin stated that the PRC and DPRK would continually advance together in order to achieve permanent peace in Korean peninsula with Kim Jongil as the central figure in accordance with the will of Kim Ilsung.<sup>50</sup> Judging from this, Beijing's strategic priority on the DPRK as a political and ideological companion did not change.

Article IV states, “the contracting parties will continue to consult with each other on all important international questions of common interest to the two countries.” However, reaching a complete agreement between individual countries is impossible when a wide variety interests are entangled in international society. Not only that, in Article VII, it is said that “the treaty will remain in force until the contracting parties agree on its amendment or termination,” in contrast to the 1961 treaty between the USSR and DPRK.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, treaty between the PRC and DPRK has special value beyond cooperation in terms of permanent validity, guaranty of military assistance and blood brotherhood.

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<sup>49</sup> Pobzeb Vang, *Five Principles*, 492.

<sup>50</sup> Dan Lee, “Changes of DPRK-China Relationship,” 38.

<sup>51</sup> Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea article IV, Pobzeb Vang, *Five Principles*, 492.

Table 4. Comparison of Treaties Between the PRC-DPRK and USSR-DPRK <sup>52</sup>

	Sino-Korean Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance	Soviet Union-Korean Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance
Yr	11 July 1961	6 July 1961
Main agreement	Immediately rendering military and other assistance by all means in the event of one of the contracting parties being subjected to the armed attack by any state Not concluding or taking part in any alliance directed against the other Party	
Amendment of treaty	Valid until both parties agree on its amendment or termination	Valid 10 years from the beginning day of treaty; after that, renewal every 5 years
Present Status	No mutual/public announcement of Change in treaty status	Terminated in Sep, 1996

### Functions of Treaty

The PRC-DPRK treaty has many functions. First of all, it guarantees national security interests between two countries. From Pyongyang's perspective, a major effect of treaty is that the DPRK is secured from external threats. China undoubtedly is its most important ally, and has the military and political capability to deter any military action from the US, ROK, and Japan.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, Beijing also considers the Korean peninsula a special region as far as in ensuring China's interests. In terms of geopolitical stability, a roughly 1,300km border line is shared with the DPRK. Moreover, the DPRK has like politics, many similar institutions, and ideology to the PRC.<sup>54</sup> Finally, Beijing has made an effort to secure survival of the DPRK on the grounds that the PRC's national interest is associated with existence of Kim Ilsung's regime. China considers the DPRK a buffer zone that maintains the stability of northern and eastern regions.<sup>55</sup> In addition, ethnic Koreans living in China's northeastern provinces have a close relationship with

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<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Unification, *Monthly North Korea Trend*, (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Jayshree Bajoria, "The China-North Korea Relationship," *Council on Foreign Relations*, July 21, 2009, [Http://www.cfr.org/publication/11097/chinanorth\\_korea\\_relationship.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/11097/chinanorth_korea_relationship.html), (accessed October 1, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> Dan Lee, "Changes of DPRK-China Relationship," 26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 37.

North Korea and maintaining friendly relationship with them is helpful to reduce any potential Korean ethnic domestic conflict in China.

Briefly, unilateral military and economic assistance to the DPRK stemmed from judgment that protecting Pyongyang from intervention by the surrounding powers and aiding the DPRK regime and its sovereignty have been essential to a favorable security environment for China.

Secondly, their treaty enables the two countries to cooperate in the international arena. Based on Article IV, whenever a crisis or problem happens, they develop their response through high-level talks. Finally, a major function of treaty has been to maintain the balance of power in Northeast Asia. Establishment of the PRC-DPRK treaty expanded the possibility of intervention and leverage for the two great Communist powers. For example, after World War II, and at the beginning the Cold War era, diplomatic tension between the U.S.-Japan security treaty and both the PRC and USSR was the defining political structure in the East Asian region.<sup>56</sup> Under these conditions, the establishment of Sino-DPRK and the Soviet-DPRK treaty in 1961 created a triangle of socialist cooperation against bilateral treaties Washington had already concluded both with ROK in 1953, and with Japan in 1951 and 1960. The balance of power and mutual deterrence, therefore, were maintained through these treaty efforts with the DPRK. However, Since the 1960s, the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute deepened and Beijing reconciled with Washington.<sup>57</sup> Even though Sino-Soviet cooperation weakened and evolved into a new triangular cooperation among China, the United States and even (to some extent) Japan, the relationship between the PRC and DPRK still reflected the classic characteristics of the Cold War. It still served to keep the balance of power in Northeast Asia, At least from the PRC and DPRK perspective. As a result, the alliance between the PRC-DPRK has continued.

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<sup>56</sup> Soo Lee, “North Korea and Chinese Relation after Normalization of South Korea-China Relation,” (Master’s thesis, Sungkyunkwan University, 2008), 11.

<sup>57</sup> Yongho Kim, “Forty Years of the Sino-North Korean Alliance: Beijing’s Declining Credibility and Pyongyang’s Bandwagoning with Washington,” *Issues & Studies* 37, no. 2 (March/April 2001), 151.

## C. DETERMINANTS OF THE PRC-DPRK ALLIANCE

### 1. The Cold War System

A wide variety of factors influenced establishment of the PRC-DPRK alliance. In particular, East-West tension served as main catalyst. After World War II, international society faced turning point. With the end of World War II, enormous communist political power, such as communization of Eastern Europe under the control of the Soviet Union and the communization of China, appeared on the stage of international politics.<sup>58</sup> In this transition, international order became bipolar. The Cold War system had three characteristics.<sup>59</sup> First of all, ideological thought shaped the emerging international order and relationships among countries. Confrontation among countries was recognized at the level of ideological competence and conflict rather than level of traditional national interests. International society, on both sides, subsequently simplified the framing of this confrontation as the struggle between virtue and vice. Secondly, the Cold War system served to suppress national interests and even the national identity of individual countries. As a result, the United States and USSR established hegemony in the name of collective security and ideological unity. Finally, the United States and USSR directly or indirectly became involved in most conflicts and disputes in the world. There now was possibility that regional conflicts always might explode into international crises. Such facts played a significant role in tight-knit relationship between the PRC and DPRK.

### 2. Geo-Political Factors

In addition, geo-political factors affected China's strategic posture toward the Korean peninsula.<sup>60</sup> The Korean peninsula shares a border with China on the Yalu and Tumen rivers. From a Chinese perspective, the Korean peninsula is on the immediate

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<sup>58</sup> Dan Lee, "Changes of DPRK-China Relationship," 76.

<sup>59</sup> Jinyoung Seo, *Policy Prospect and interests of four countries around the Korean Peninsula* (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 1992), 171.

<sup>60</sup> Geo-politic is scholarship analyzing how geographical condition fundamentally influence on authority of international politics. Deoksun Lim, *Geopolitics* (Seoul: Buebmoonsa, 1999).

periphery of its territory.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the PRC regarded the Korean peninsula as a shield for China; in particular China's central industrial and political districts, Northeast and north China.<sup>62</sup>

In the Ming and Qing era, China considered other countries' invasions of the Korean peninsula a greater threat than invasions of mainland China's coast.<sup>63</sup> The Chinese recalled that Korea was the route by which imperial Japan launched its invasion of the Chinese mainland in the early twentieth century. In its traditional view toward the Korean peninsula, China did not occupy or force political dependency as long as the Korean peninsula stayed friendly. However, if an aggressive country dominated the Korean peninsula, it was recognized as threat to China. Therefore, it tended to manage or control the Korean peninsula.<sup>64</sup> China's sense of vulnerability along the Korean peninsula was reinforced by swift U.S. intervention in the Korean War.<sup>65</sup> Present Chinese leaders follow this classical view toward Korea. Jiang Zemin told his North Korean hosts in September 2001, during a three-day visit to Pyongyang, that because China is "close to the Korean peninsula, China is always concerned about the development of the situation on the peninsula and has consistently worked to maintain peace and stability on the peninsula."<sup>66</sup> North Korea's geopolitical position also makes it emphasize that the DPRK and China are directly connected with each other, while specific environment, division of peninsula, pushes North Korea to drift away from friendly relationship with other countries.

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<sup>61</sup> Kitaek Lee, *Theory of Modern International Politics* (Seoul: Pakyoungsa, 1997), 329–336.

<sup>62</sup> Samuel S. Kim, "The Changing Role of China on the Korean Peninsula," *International Journal of Korean Studies* 8, no.1 (Fall/Winter 2004): 81.

<sup>63</sup> Werner Levi, *Modern China's Foreign Policy* (Minnesota Polis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 360.

<sup>64</sup> CP Fitzgerald, *Chinese View of their Place in World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Scobell, "China and North Korea: the close but uncomfortable relationship," *Current History* 101 (September 2002): 279.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 279

### **3. Sino-Soviet Split**

Another major determinant was the Sino-Soviet split. At the Communist Party of the Soviet Union twentieth Congress in February 1956, Khrushchev argued that peaceful co-existence with imperialism is possible and that war between the West and East could be avoided.<sup>67</sup> However, Beijing did not agree with Khrushchev's view because China was confronted Taiwan as well as U.S. military threats.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, Khrushchev condemned China's artillery attacks against Taiwan in 1950s and after meeting with Eisenhower and he withdrew the proposal of supporting of China's Nuclear Weapon development program. Mao Zedong regarded Moscow's behavior as intervention in China's domestic affairs. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956 had also intensified the split between the PRC and USSR. Mao was concerned about possibility that he would be criticized like Stalin. As a result, Mao believed that Khrushchev's line was heresy and could threaten Chinese political structure. From 1960 to 1988, Soviet Union withdrew all military and economic assistance to the PRC, including nuclear weapon development.

As the dispute deepened, China was strategically in trouble. In the early 1950s, China had tried to prepare for the war against the United States and achieve military and economic development through alliance with Soviet Union.<sup>69</sup> However, Beijing now had to revise its initial plan due to conflict with Moscow and detent between the United States and the USSR in the late 1950s. In this situation, China tried to strengthen its strategic position by allying with Pyongyang. The positive effects of such an alliance were as follows:

First of all, China could reinforce the relationship with Pyongyang as "buffer zone" in preparation against any U.S military threat, especially given that Washington already had helped Taiwan strengthen its military capability after signing up a mutual

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<sup>67</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton & Company, Inc, 1990), 586.

<sup>68</sup> Steven M. Goldstein, "Nationalism and Internationalism: Sino-Soviet Relations," in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, eds., Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (New York: Clarendon Press, 1994), 237.

<sup>69</sup> Mori Kasuko, *China and Soviet Union* (Seoul: Saminseokak, 1989), 76.

defense treaty in 1954.<sup>70</sup> Secondly, China would not leave North Korea under influence of Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union tried to dispatch its military into the North Korea or control Pyongyang, Beijing would face a sticky wicket strategically. On the other hand, if China had the greater influence in North Korea, it would serve safeguard that could prevent Moscow from exerting influence.<sup>71</sup> Finally, China welcomed the support of North Korea to sustain Mao's ideological legitimacy. As Mao saw the denunciation of Stalin, establishing an anti-Soviet front line with Kim Ilsung would help reinforce his own (Mao's) political position.<sup>72</sup>

#### **4. Similarity of Political System Between the PRC-DPRK**

In addition, the similarity of political systems in the two countries was also a determinant. Stephen White compared Western democratic states with communist states using four standards. First, every communist country is based on Marxism-Leninism. This ideology is the foundation of politics as well as basis of authority. Secondly, their economies all are managed by government plan. The central government makes a plan and decides the process for development of the country. Thirdly, sovereignty belongs to mono-political party. Finally, the party/government regulates the judicial branch, the press, and even labor. Using this standard, the political similarities between the PRC and DPRK are shown in Table 5.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 172.

<sup>71</sup> Kitaek Lee, *Modern International Politics* (Seoul: Ilsinsa, 1986), 469.

<sup>72</sup> Changhee Park, "Geopolitical interest change and North Korea-China alliance relationship: Rising, Developing and viewing," *Research on China-Russia affairs* 113 (spring, 2007): 32–35.

<sup>73</sup> Stephen White et al., *Communists and Communist Political System: An Introduction* (Hamshire: Macmillan, 1982), 13–14.

Table 5. Comparison of PRC-DPRK Political Systems

	<b>Communist Countries</b>	<b>The PRC</b>	<b>The DPRK</b>
<b>Official Ideology</b>	Marxism / Leninism	Mao Zedong Thought	Juche Idea
<b>Economy</b>	Planned Economy	Planned Economy	Planned Economy
<b>Structure of Authority</b>	Communist Party	Communist Party / Authoritarianism	Communist Party / Authoritarianism
<b>Autonomous Social Organization</b>	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed

The PRC and DPRK have similar political systems. Their political regimes are both based on proletarian revolution, and the Chinese Communist leadership views this common approach as important, and linked to the Chinese regime's political legitimacy. That is, the continued existence and health of North Korea is of considerable importance.<sup>74</sup> Even though the names of parties are different—Chinese Communist Party and Workers Party of Korea—they have a commonality with each other in terms of principles and doctrine. This extends beyond (historically similar) planned economies, but also extends to similar past political situations. Both have been divided nations and unification under communism is their ultimate regime goal(s).

#### D. CONCLUSION

The relationship between the PRC and DPRK was bonded by strong cultural and social influences. More than half-century of battlefield cooperation significantly influenced their alliance.<sup>75</sup> In addition, the PRC and DPRK bonded in their shared Leninist ideologies and their divided nation identities: the separation of North Korea from South Korea on the Korean peninsula and the separation of the PRC on the mainland

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<sup>74</sup> Scobell, "China and North Korea," 278.

<sup>75</sup> Andrew Scobell, "China and North Korea: From Comrades in Arms to Allies at Arm's length," *Strategic Study Institution* (March 2004): 1–2.

from the Republic of China on Taiwan.<sup>76</sup> Such shared interests and identities between two countries have helped them achieve close relations. Moreover, international political environments, such as the Cold War and Sino-Soviet dispute, helped them pursue friendly relations as well.

From Beijing's perspective, alliance with Pyongyang has brought about several advantages. First of all, China could utilize North Korea as a buffer zone between China and the military forces of the United States and its allies.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, allying with Pyongyang prevented China from ideological split and provided Beijing with dominant position in communist world, and in the competition with Soviet Union. In brief, Beijing chose the alliance with Pyongyang in order to guarantee China's survival and secure its national interests.<sup>78</sup>

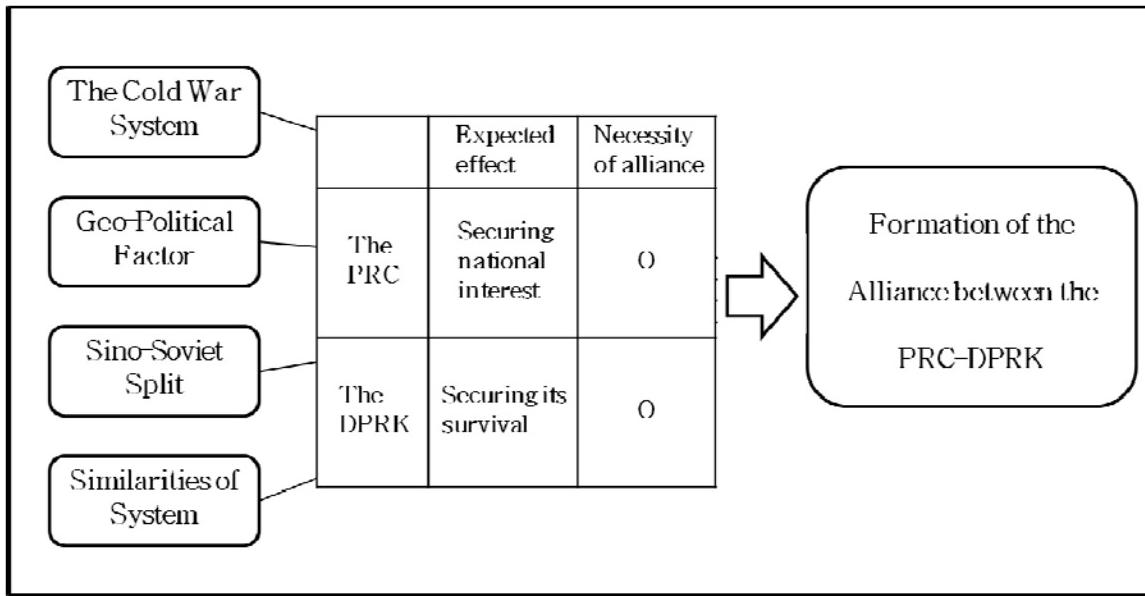


Figure 1. Determinant of the Alliance Between the PRC and DPRK

<sup>76</sup> Dick K. Nanto et al., "China-North Korea Relations," *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress*, R41043 (January, 2010): 5, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41043.pdf>, (accessed September 28, 2010).

<sup>77</sup> Scobell, "China and North Korea," 275.

<sup>78</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," *Survival* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 157–158.

### **III. THE CHANGES AND ADJUSTMENT FACTORS OF THE PRC-DPRK ALLIANCE**

China's policy toward the DPRK has headed toward expanding universality and minimizing specialty in accordance with domestic and international changes since the late 1990s. Considering these points, the PRC-DPRK alliance is now more uncomfortable than in the past. Above all, new Chinese leaders have shown a skeptical concern toward North Korea's security situation—and its political and economic situation. Sino-South Korea normalization at the end of the Cold War has affected the relationship between the PRC and DPRK. China now is more focused on becoming a constructive arbitrator between the United States and Korean peninsula in the Northeast Asian region.

Beijing now would rather employ flexible policies toward North Korea in order to maintain a positive relationship with other countries. Eventually, the PRC-DPRK alliance faces a qualitative transition with greater stress on realism than ideology, preparing for the future rather than looking back on the traditional relationship, and also promoting institutional cooperation rather than personal ties. In the following section, I will review adjustments in the PRC-DPRK alliance in terms of changes in the international environment, Chinese domestic economy policy, and diplomatic ties with South Korea.

#### **A. CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS ENVIRONMENT AND ITS EFFECTS.**

##### **1. Changes in International Politics: End of the Cold War**

The bipolar axis of international politics after WW II was altered with Khrushchev's declaration of the peaceful coexistence line and first détente in 1970s.<sup>79</sup> However, this movement did not begin an earnest détente because the West did not seriously accommodate it. True détente, therefore, was not found until the appearance of

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<sup>79</sup> Eunbee Kim, "Study on Change of Sino-DPRK Alliance Cogensiveness after the Cold War," (Master's thesis, Yonsei University, 2007), 43.

Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 and his policies for making peace based on new thinking.<sup>80</sup> These transitions helped dissolve the structure of the Cold War, and the distinctions of ideological confrontation, the root of the Cold War, disappeared after 1989. The Warsaw Pact was dismantled in 1991, and in the West, even the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began fundamental reorganization to reflect the changes.<sup>81</sup> The significance of military and security issues weakened, characteristics of alliances changed, and even equalized in some cases, based on how individual countries defined their national interests.<sup>82</sup> Relationships among countries are now changed more by considerations of economic gain and loss than by differing ideology.

Changes in the international order were based on four characteristics. First of all, international order switched to a U.S.-centered multi-polar system after the collapse of the USSR, and equalitarianism was magnified in the alliance system rather than order of rank among countries. Second, as function of ideology was weakened among Eastern bloc countries, existing socialist countries engaged in practical diplomacy, with the objective of maximizing national interests. Third, efforts to construct security communities spread with the aim of achieving regional collective security. Finally, instead of ideology, economic profits had gained significant influence on countries' relationships.<sup>83</sup>

The characteristics of international relationships from the post-Cold War era also have affected Chinese alliance policies with North Korea. First of all, the strategic value of North Korea has lessened. In the Cold War era, North Korea was important to China in the frame of the confrontation between the capitalist and communist worlds, as well as in

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<sup>80</sup> Gorbachev declare that such as interdependence world and mutual security cooperation are needed in the relationship among countries including the US and USSR. And it served as stepping stone heading Detante. David Holloway, "Gorbachev's new thinking, America and the world," *Foreign affairs*, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/44001/david-holloway/gorbachevs-new-thinking>, (accessed September 25, 2010).

<sup>81</sup> Dan Lee, "Study on the transition of alliance between the PRC-DPRK," *Collection of Research on Northeast Asian region*, no. 31 (2004): 320.

<sup>82</sup> Moonyoung Huh, "North Korea's nuclear and peace of the Korean Peninsula," *Institute for Integration Research* 18 (2005): 25.

<sup>83</sup> Moonyoung Huh, *Relationship between Russia and North Korea in the end of Cold War era* (Seoul: institution for national unification, 1993) 47.

the frame of internal conflict within communist bloc and Sino-Soviet split.<sup>84</sup> However, the collapse of the Cold War system diminished the strategic value of North Korea. Secondly, China focused more on “low politics,” such as trade, investment, and technical cooperation rather than “high politics” related to military concerns.<sup>85</sup> Such features were reflected in China’s policies toward the DPRK. China’s adoption of this “practical” diplomacy caused changes in its relationship with North Korea in the form of decreasing military and political assistance.

## **2. Changes in International Politics: Sino- Soviet Reconciliation**

The specific international environment of the confrontation of communist and capitalist worlds gave North Korea a strategically important position. North Korea also possessed a great strategic value in the Sino-Soviet split. The end of the Cold War, however, cost Pyongyang its position of strategic importance. North Korea also was deprived of the status of buffer state at least partially as a result of the reconciliation between Beijing and Moscow.

First, the Sino-Soviet reconciliation produced transitions in the triangular relation among the PRC, USSR and DPRK. In the early 1980s, the USSR lost international support in the Soviet-Afghan war, and existing Eastern European satellites began to detach from the influence of the USSR in the name of reformation. The USSR was in a predicament. As a result, Moscow tried to recover its friendly relationship with Beijing and overcome its adverse bi-polar international political struggle against Washington. At the beginning of 1980s, there seemed to be some chances for Communist nations’ fence-mending.<sup>86</sup> In March 1982, at the speech in Tashkent, the USSR Secretary Brezhnev delivered a conciliatory message suggesting that relationship between the PRC and USSR

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<sup>84</sup> Scobell, “China and North Korea,” 276

<sup>85</sup> Dan Lee, “Changes of DPRK-China Relationship and its Durability,” (Master’s thesis, Chonnam National University, 2003), 75.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 76.

be mended by negotiation toward the PRC. In response to Moscow's gesture, Deng Xiaoping looked forward. As a result, semi-annual meetings between deputy foreign ministers of both countries began in October 1982.<sup>87</sup>

As Sino-Soviet relations began to thaw, Beijing's perspective toward Pyongyang shifted. Beijing recognized that Gorbachev's efforts to relieve East-West tension would alleviate the security threat in the Northeast Asian region. In 1989, Deng Xiaoping and Gorbachev held a summit for the first time since Mao and Khrushchev had held a summit in 1959.<sup>88</sup> As a result, PRC-DPRK relations decayed.

Second, from Pyongyang's perspective, the Sino-Soviet reconciliation and end of Cold War meant losses of benefits that they had enjoyed in the bi-polar system. Economic, military, and political assistance and advantage from the Communist world were lost, which meant Pyongyang also lost its friendly strategic environment.<sup>89</sup> These changes forced Pyongyang to readjust its relationship with traditional allies. Moscow and Pyongyang discarded their existing security treaty in 1996 and negotiated a new treaty in 2000.<sup>90</sup> Notwithstanding, Beijing started to consider North Korea a needed objective to make peaceful, stable environment rather than strategic priority for its economic development. Beijing's accommodation with Moscow moved that relationship from hostile rivalry to companion.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, China strategically stood at a flexible position on the stage of international politics.

### **3. Effect of Changes in International Politics on the PRC-DPRK Alliance**

Throughout the period of these changes, and consistently over time, Pyongyang has strongly opposed capitalism and the Western bloc. Kim-Ilsung declared that the DPRK "must advance and guard socialism for great achievement" in the Pyongyang

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<sup>87</sup> Changhee Park, "Eurasia Geo-political Changes and Sino-Russia relations," *National Strategy* 12, (2006): 78.

<sup>88</sup> Vang, *Five Principles*, 124–125.

<sup>89</sup> Lee, "Change of North Korea-China's Alliance," 41.

<sup>90</sup> Vang, *Five Principle*, 508–509

<sup>91</sup> Changhee Park, Relationship between China and Russia and Geopolitical changes in Eurasia, *National Strategy* 12 (2006): 80–85.

announcement of April, 1992.<sup>92</sup> He also stated, through the editorial column of official daily news, that “imperialists and reactionaries are arguing sophistry in order to beautify and propagate their ideology.” He said, “We must achieve victory by protecting socialism, but if we throw it away, there will be only death.”<sup>93</sup> Antagonisms like these against the West and capitalists overflowed in Pyongyang without surcease.

Pyongyang, however, did not want to strain its relationship with Beijing. On a six-day official visit to the PRC in November 1990, Youn Hyungmook, premier of the DPRK, met with Li Peng, Premier of the PRC. Youn requested an economic assistance agreement and invited Li Peng to Pyongyang, and in a conference with Chinese high ranking officials emphasized his belief the “relationship between the two countries would never be changed by any transition in international society.”<sup>94</sup>

After Youn’s visit, Li Peng visited the DPRK for four-days in May 1991 and discussed international trends on the Korean peninsula, such as South Korea-USSR normalization and Korea’s joining the UN. Even though Li Peng clarified that there would be no changes in China’s policies toward North Korea, he implied that China wanted to establish a new relationship with Pyongyang because he also emphasized that China’s open policy would be continued and suggested North Korea’s participation in economic reform.<sup>95</sup> Pyongyang believed that China’s effort at economic reform was too excessive. However, in order to avoid friction that might cause diplomatic isolation, Pyongyang refrained from criticizing China’s economic policy. From the DPRK’s perspective, the end of the Cold War and transition in China’s national policies diminished its security assistance from major alliances. In particular, Pyongyang already suffered from a shortage of food and an energy crisis in the 1990s, so it was impossible for North Korea to improve its capabilities for national security. The new international order meant a collapse of alliances as well as a negative strategic environment for the DPRK.

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<sup>92</sup> “Editorial Column,” *Rodong Shinmoon*, April 22, 1992.

<sup>93</sup> “Editorial Column,” *Rodong Shinmoon*, May 19, 1992.

<sup>94</sup> Jinook Choi, *2008 North Korea* (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 2008), 162–163.

<sup>95</sup> Dan Lee, “Study on the Transition of Alliance,” 161–162.

China's decreased threats caused by the end of the Cold War created transitions in the PRC-DPRK security alliance. As China was not threatened by potential and present enemies, its alliance with the DPRK did not serve its original role. As a result, even as North Korea's threat recognition was increased, the PRC-DPRK alliance was weakened.

## B. CHINA'S OPEN DOOR POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A new approach toward foreign dealings was discussed at high-level Chinese leadership meetings in May 1992 and resulted in a comprehensive program under the guidance of the State Council. China began a major new stage in its policy of opening to the outside.<sup>96</sup> That document, entitled “The CCP Central Committee’s Opinions on Expediting Reform, Opening Wider to the Outside World, and Working to Raise the Economy to a new level in a better and Quicker Way,” was intended to be the “Magna Carta” of economic reform for the next 100 years.<sup>97</sup> With Beijing’s effort to reform its economic system, friction between the PRC and DPRK increased.

### 1. Origin and Process of China’s Open Door Policy

Since the 1978 economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping opened up China to trade and foreign investment, Chinese elites had aimed to change fixed socialism into flexible socialism through economic modernization and growth, overcoming a “century of shame and humiliation.”<sup>98</sup> China’s economy underwent a major structural transformation from the closed, planned, Soviet-style programs of the Maoist period to a decentralized, open-market style economy.<sup>99</sup> China’s economic reform invited foreign investment and technology, overcoming differences of ideology and political systems. It also spurred Chinese economic growth and progress by combining foreign investments with domestic resources.

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<sup>96</sup> Joseph Fewsmith, *China since Tianmen: the Politic of Transition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 62.

<sup>97</sup> Michael E. Marti, *China and the Legacy of Deng Xiaoping* (Virginia: Brassey’s Inc. 2002) 114.

<sup>98</sup> Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China’s grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica, Claif: Rand, 2000) 98-99; Samuel S. Kim, “China’s path to Great Power Status in the Globalization Era,” *Asian Perspective* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 52–53.

<sup>99</sup> Michael D. Swaine, *China: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: National Defense Research Institute, 1995), 57.

Deng declared that “China’s reform policy is turned in my hand and Chinese reform policy should continue under basis of independent self reliance.”<sup>100</sup> He recognized that modernization of Chinese socialization was possible if they continued an open-door policy in foreign relations.

In order to attract foreign capital, China established special economic zones on the South China coast in 1979 near Hong Kong and opposite Taiwan. By building a favorable condition for the exploitation of Chinese labor and the making of quick profits, China rapidly improved its productive capability and accelerated foreign investment.<sup>101</sup> Although Beijing reviewed its open door policy after Tiananmen Crisis to solve problems that derived from reform process (such as the gap between the rich and poor and public corruption), Deng Xiaoping argued that pursuing more rapid economic growth could stabilize the domestic landscape and diminish the influence of external changes.<sup>102</sup> He famously asserted at this time that it did not matter whether a cat was black or white as long as it caught mice.

With this distinction, Deng opened the theoretical foundation for a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics. In October 1992, the CCP’s fourteenth National Congress adopted a “socialist market economy” as the mainland’s new economic system.<sup>103</sup> Also, in November 1993, in the wake of Deng Xiaoping’s “Whirlwind”<sup>104</sup>, a “Decision on Some Issues Concerning the Establishment of Socialist Market Economic Structure” was adopted by the Third Plenary session of the CCP’s fourteenth Central Committee, initiating an ambitious reform program.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping Quotes* (Beijing: Central Press, 1988), 322.

<sup>101</sup> Maurice Meisner, *Mao’s China and after: A History of the People’s Republic* (New York: the Free Press, 1999), 459.

<sup>102</sup> Kicheol Park, “Neo-realistic Approach toward the PRC foreign Policy,” (PhD diss., Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 1995), 89.

<sup>103</sup> Dan Lee, “Changes of DPRK-China Relationship,” 58.

<sup>104</sup> Whirlwind refers to Deng’s spring 1992 trip through South China, in which he swept the country like a whirlwind and infused fresh vigor into its reform and opening up program. The remarks made historic contributions to mainland China’s transition form a planned to a market economy. Bih-Jaw Lin and James T. Myers, *Contemporary China in the Post Cold War Era* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 85.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 85.

The process of establishment of Chinese market economy system theory is as follows.

Table 6. The Process of Establishment of Chinese Socialist Market System Theory<sup>106</sup>

Year	Speaker	Content
1979. 11	Deng Xiaoping	It is wrong to apply market economy to capitalism
1984.10	CCP's twelfth Central Committee Third Plenum	Socialistic economy means pursuing planned economy based on shared economy Socialistic economy is not completely managed by “invisible hand”
1985.10	Deng Xiaoping	We need to combine planned economy and market economy There are no contradictions between socialism and market economy China should promote productivity by socialistic market economy
1987.9	CCP's thirteenth Congress	There is market economy system within socialism Plan and market should achieve integration
1989.6	Deng Xiaoping	China constantly tries to combine planned economy and market economy China has to clearly control market functions and plan in accordance with practical needs
1990.12	Deng Xiaoping	Socialistic economy could have market, capitalism also have plan. Planned economy does not mean socialism
1992. 6	Deng Xiaoping	Plan and market, both are methods to develop economic growth
1992.12	Jiang Zemin	Objective of economic reform is to build socialistic market economic system.

Constructing market economy system is a major element in the success of speeding up “reform and opening,” as well as stepping stone in its economy. Through this process, China set out its own theoretical basis for intensive economic reform.

## 2. Conflict between the PRC-DPRK on Open Door Policy

From the perspective of post-Mao reform and opening to China, the South Korean economy represented opportunities to be exploited, whereas North Korea posed a burden to be lessened without damaging geopolitical ties or causing system collapse.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Dan Lee, “Changes of DPRK-China Relationship,” 59.

<sup>107</sup> Samuel S. Kim, “Making of China’s Korea policy,” in *the Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, eds., David M. Lampton (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 371.

China's attitude toward change made Pyongyang uncomfortable. Expansion of contacts and increased trade between the PRC and ROK meant North Korea began to lose ground. At the same time, the PRC and ROK came into a closer relationship in the name of economic cooperation and participation in international sports competition, Pyongyang decided to keep pace with Soviet decision when setting up its foreign policy direction. In this context, signs of significant negative changes in the relationship between the two countries continued. Since China raised the “initial stage of socialism” in 1981, Pyongyang started to criticize Chinese “reform and opening” policy. In particular, in June 1999 in an official column, Kim Jongil argued, “It is important to trample anti-socialist elements before they come in sight.”<sup>108</sup> This perception showed denial and rejection of Chinese market system theory.

However, from North Korea’s perspective, China’s support and assistance was needed to maintain its regime and sovereignty. Therefore, Pyongyang indicated that North Korea would give wholehearted support to China’s reform policy and respect the people’s choice in order to make a favorable relationship between both countries. That is, the relative degree of intimacy depended on necessities of the DPRK.

### C. ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH SOUTH KOREA

Under its “open policy,” the PRC aggressively pursued economic cooperation with the ROK. In the early 1980s, China started a non-political exchange through indirect trade; it accomplished normalization of diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1992.<sup>109</sup> Since then, the PRC-ROK relationship has been rapidly expanding in political and economic fields, including military interchange in the late 1990s, while the PRC-DPRK relationship became qualitatively estranged.

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<sup>108</sup> Ilwan Oh, *Survival strategy of Kim Jongil Regime through Militraty-first politics* (Seoul: Hanyang University, 2005), [http://jmf.or.kr/jmf/technote/read.cgi?board=mis\\_korea&y\\_number=378](http://jmf.or.kr/jmf/technote/read.cgi?board=mis_korea&y_number=378), (accessed November 10, 2010).

<sup>109</sup> Jinook Choi, *2008 North Korea*, 163.

## 1. The Sino-South Korean Normalization

The PRC and ROK, which had severed all contact in 1970s, began non-governmental trade in 1980s. After Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, both countries moved closer to each other.<sup>110</sup> In particular, even though trade with Western countries, including the United States, was diminished by the Tiananmen crisis in 1989, trade between the PRC-ROK increased.<sup>111</sup> The development of the PRC-ROK relationship in this way was triggered by domestic and international policies of both countries as well as international political transitions. In the late 1970s, declaring a new policy of economic reform and opening, China Communist leaders, including China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping developed a more positive view toward South Korea. In the 1980s, Zhao Ziyang and then Communist Party of China Central secretariat General Secretary, Hu Yaobang, said in interviews with Greek and Yugoslavian communist papers, "China thoroughly goes deep into the development of South Korea because reform policies of the PRC are based on the experience of Korea."<sup>112</sup> South Korea also tried to embody "a Nord Politik" based on improved international status.

Reflecting these changes in Chinese perceptions toward Korea and world political changes, economic trade between the PRC and ROK gradually increased. As China relieved controls of central planning and constructed special economic zone on its coast starting in 1985, relations between them improved. As a result, trade volume increased from \$20 million in 1979 to \$58 billion in 1991, moving toward a normalization of their relationship.<sup>113</sup> Also, the form of economic trade evolved into direct trade and joint venture cooperation when investment of Korean capital expanded.<sup>114</sup>

Finally, on August 24, 1992, Qian Qichen the State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC and Yi Sang-Ok, foreign minister of the ROK, signed a six

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<sup>110</sup> Jongho, Shin, "Policy Brief: 2010 Prediction of China's Condition and Sino-Korea Relationship," *Gyeonggi Research Institute* (January, 2010): 11.

<sup>111</sup> News Bank, "East Asia," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, June 8, 1989, 28.

<sup>112</sup> Yongsuk Jung, "China's recognition toward South Korea," *North Korea* (April, 1984): 79.

<sup>113</sup> Seung Kim, *China's Foreign Policies and Korea* (Seoul: Goryewon, 1999), 222–223.

<sup>114</sup> Juyoung Kim, *Evaluation of South Korean Investment toward China* (Seoul: Korea EXIM Bank, 2002), 1-3, [www.koreaexim.go.kr/kr/file/board/020724\\_1.hwp](http://www.koreaexim.go.kr/kr/file/board/020724_1.hwp). (accessed November 14, 2010).

points Sino-ROK joint communique in Beijing.<sup>115</sup> With this effort, they built sufficient conditions for demonstrating economic potential in terms of geographical proximity, economic cooperation and reciprocity. This, and the subsequent formal establishment of diplomatic relations affected every area from the economy to culture, and the relationship between the two countries showed unparalleled historical development henceforward.

国共产党中央委员会总书记(1980—1987)

## **2. Present State of Mutual Exchange Between the PRC and ROK and Implications**

Establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and ROK formed a new political structure in Northeast Asia that transcended ideology. Political cooperation was especially active. By diplomacy through leadership visits, including summit talks, these two countries outlined the future of mutual cooperation in the Northeast Asian region as well as other issues of the Korean peninsula. In March 1994, President Kim Youngsam's visit to China achieved increased political credibility and understanding during the tense period of the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. The PRC and ROK agreed, in principle, on a reciprocal understanding and agreement to solve the nuclear crisis. This played a significant role in the process of resolving the 1994 nuclear crisis.<sup>116</sup> In addition, in September 1994, the nuclear crisis subsided thanks to an agreement between the United States and DPRK; Li Peng, the PRC premier, then came to South Korea by invitation of President Kim Youngsam enriched the economic relationship and promoted a more stable security environment.<sup>117</sup>

Both countries declared a goal to be cooperative partners in the twenty-first century, following up on the historic visits of Jiang Zemin to South Korea in 1995 and Kim Daejung to China in 1998. It was also an opportunity to expand the range of security cooperation on the Korean peninsula between both countries. In the 1990s, President Roh

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<sup>115</sup> Vang, *Five Principles*, 543.

<sup>116</sup> Taehwan Lee, "Sino-ROK Strategic Partnership: Evaluation and Prediction," *Sejong Policy Research* 6 (2010): 125.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 127.

Taewoo and Kim Youngsam also made efforts to strengthen the amicable relationship with Beijing with a summit talks.<sup>118</sup> It was clear that leaders of both countries now had a shared interest in Sino-South Korea relations.

Another effect was development of economic cooperation. On September 27, 1992, President Roh and the ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the ORK Minister of the Commercial and Industrial Department visited China together with business leaders of the Korean economy.<sup>119</sup> On September 30, they concluded a diverse cooperation agreement calling for bilateral investment. Bilateral economic cooperation got a firm boost by this treaty. Particularly, the establishment of an “economy, trade and technology committee” contributed to cooperation between the two countries; it transferred existing protection for private investment into an official agreement of the government.<sup>120</sup> After establishment of relations, both sought to plan a regional economic cooperation organization.<sup>121</sup> Trade volume between the two countries in 1992 was \$63.79 billion. As time went by, trade volume continued to increase as follows.

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<sup>118</sup> Vang, *Five Principles*, 554–557.

<sup>119</sup> Sangcheol Lee, “China-South Korea Summit in Beijing,” *Chosun Ilbo*, September 28, 1992, [http://srchdb1.chosun.com/pdf/i\\_service/pdf\\_ReadBody.jsp?Y=1992&M=09&D=28&ID=9209280101](http://srchdb1.chosun.com/pdf/i_service/pdf_ReadBody.jsp?Y=1992&M=09&D=28&ID=9209280101), (accessed September 18, 2010).

<sup>120</sup> Vang, *Five Principle*, 546–547.

<sup>121</sup> Taehwan Lee, *The Korean peninsula*, 139.

Table 7. Trade Statistic Table Between the PRC and ROK (\$, Millions, %)<sup>122</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Import</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rate of increase</b>
<b>1990</b>	585	2,262	2,847	39.2
<b>1991</b>	1,003	3,441	4,444	55.8
<b>1992</b>	2,654	3,725	6,379	43.5
<b>1993</b>	5,151	3,929	9,080	42.3
<b>1994</b>	6,203	5,463	11,666	28.5
<b>1995</b>	10,293	6,689	16,982	44.8
<b>1996</b>	12,481	7,499	19,980	20.4
<b>1997</b>	14,929	9,116	24,045	20.6
<b>1998(1-10)</b>	11,911	4,922	16,822	-11.5

Even in an internationally stagnant economic situation, their trade volume reached \$199.80 billion. Rate of increase was 20.4 percents compared to the previous year.<sup>123</sup> In addition, according to statistical data provided by the ROK Ministry of Knowledge Economy (MKE), South Korean expected a target of 12.5 percent average annual growth of exports over the next six years. South Korean exports are projected to reach \$410 billion in 2010 compared to \$393 billion in 2009.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Department of Foreign Trade, *Chinese Trade Report* (Beijing: Department of Foreign Trade, 1996), 71.

<sup>123</sup> “Trade Volume with China increased by 22 times after Sino-South Korea Normalization,” Newminjoo.com, May 6, 2010, [http://newminjoo.com/sub\\_read.html?uid=3192&section=sc24](http://newminjoo.com/sub_read.html?uid=3192&section=sc24), (accessed September 18, 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Scott Snyder, China-Korea Relations: China Embraces South and North, but Differently, *A quarterly E-journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations* (January 2010): 5.

Table 8. South Korea's Investment Toward China 1992–1996 (Unit: Billions)<sup>125</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Consultation of investment</b>		<b>Actual investment</b>
<b>1990</b>	Number	Amount	Amount
<b>1978-1991</b>	298	2.06	0.56
<b>1992</b>	650	4.17	1.20
<b>1993</b>	1,748	15.57	3.74
<b>1994</b>	1,849	15.57	7.23
<b>1995</b>	1,975	29.98	10.42
<b>1996</b>	1,895	42.36	13.57
<b>Total</b>	8,415	111,20	36,72

Not only that, in 1994, the two countries established industrial collaboration committee in order to create strategic cooperation in 1994. They also opened more than ten air and sea routes. Judging from this, cooperation between the two countries meant that there were enormous changes in structural and qualitative aspects.

### **3. Effect of Sino-South Korean Normalization on the PRC-DPRK Alliance**

Before the establishment of relationship with South Korea, the PRC-DPRK relationship gave all the appearances of being amicable. The highest CCP leaders, like Jiang Zemin in 1990, Li Peng, premier of the PRC, and Yang Shangkun, PRC president in 1991, visited North Korea. After the PRC's establishment of the relationship with South Korea, however, the PRC and DPRK appeared to suspend summits for a considerable period in marked contrast with those between the PRC and ROK.

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<sup>125</sup> Department of Foreign Trade, *Chinese Trade Report*, 71.

Table 9. High Level Sino-DPRK Talks and Sino-ROK Talks(1987–2010)<sup>126</sup>

Year	High level talks between the PRC-DPRK		High level talks between the PRC-ROK			
	DPRK →PRC	PRC →DPRK	ROK→PRC	PRC→ROK	Third State	
1987	Kim Ilsung Lee Keunmo					
1988		Yang Shangkun				
1989	Kim Ilsung	Zhao Ziyang				
1990	Yeon Hyungmook	Jiang Zemin				
1991	Kim Ilsung	Li Peng				
1992		Yang Shangkun	Roh Taewoo			The Sino-ROK Normalization
1993					Kim Youngsam Jiang Zemin	
1994			Kim Youngsam	Li Peng	Kim Youngsam Jiang Zemin	1 <sup>st</sup> Nuclear crisis
1995			Lee HongKoo	Jiang Zemin Qiao Shi		
1996					Kim Youngsam Li Peng Jiang Zemin	
1997						
1998			Kim Daejoong		Kim Daejoong Zhu Rongji	
1999	Kim Youngnam		Kim Daejoong		Kim Daejoong Zhu Rongji	
2000	Kim Jongil					
2001	Kim Jongil	Jiang Zemin				
2002						2 <sup>nd</sup> Nuclear

126 “Recent Mutual Visits between Sino-DPRK and between Sino-ROK,” *Chosun Ilbo*, July 18, 2006.

Year	High level talks between the PRC-DPRK		High level talks between the PRC-ROK			
	DPRK →PRC	PRC →DPRK	ROK→PRC	PRC→ROK	Third State	
						crisis
2003						
2004	Kim Jongil					
2005		Hu Jintao				
2006	Kim Jongil		Roh Moohyun			
2007						
2008		Xi Jinping				
2009		Wen Jiabao				3 <sup>rd</sup> Nuclear crisis
2010	Kim Jongil		Lee Myungbak			Singking of Korean navy vessel

Pyongyang considered the Sino-South Korea normalization a betrayal, regardless of China's stance, because Pyongyang took their "lips and teeth" relationship seriously.<sup>127</sup> Pyongyang condemned Beijing through an official comment, saying that reinforcement of anti-imperialistic struggle was a basic requirement for completing the great socialist revolution. Pyongyang also said: "Recently, severe crisis has happened in which socialism was frustrated by the contemptible maneuvers of imperialists and a stratagem of apostates. Therefore, the most important thing is to enhance combative spirit against imperialism."<sup>128</sup>

The DPRK's censure of Beijing was revealed by North Korea's domestic actions. North Korea temporarily applied trade sanctions by consolidating custom inspections. Pyongyang delivered a protest to Beijing and notified China that its ambassador to the PRC would be recalled. North Korea also argued that social and cultural exchanges would be suspended. Actually, when Beijing requested that Kim Jongil visit China and

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<sup>127</sup> "Anti-imperialism is Fundamental Requirement for Achieving Communist affair," North Korea Central Broadcast Editorial Column, September 7, 1992.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

meet with Deng Xiaoping, Pyongyang declined this request. As a result, Chinese high ranking official's visiting to celebrate for Kim Ilsung's birthday also was cancelled.<sup>129</sup> In response to the DPRK's resistance, the PRC decided to not expand political and military relationship with the DPRK. In February 1993, Li Peng announced basic stance of policy toward the Korean peninsula; "China was not supposed to have any new political and military agreements with the DPRK. China would not be identified with creating tensions due to ideological conflict between the two Koreas. China also supported the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and talks for the unification of the Korean peninsula. China opposed providing the DPRK with advanced military equipment. Sino-South Korea normalization and development of friendly relationship is one of the PRC's foreign policies to build peaceful environment in Northeast Asia region."<sup>130</sup>

However, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wu Jianmin said that after the establishment of diplomatic relation with South Korea, "China will continue to develop the good-neighborly, friendly and cooperative relation with DPRK on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The treaties and agreements signed between the two countries will remain unchanged."<sup>131</sup> That is, Beijing seemed to be free status in the relationship with North Korea as well as maintaining traditional relationship. This implied that China's perspective toward the Korean peninsula changed from inclination toward North Korea in terms of political and military affairs to expanding China's influence on the Korean peninsula.

As everyone knows, third article of Sino-DPRK alliance treaty represented "Neither Contracting Party shall conclude any alliance directed against the other Contracting Party or take part in any bloc or in any action or measure directed against the other Contracting Party" to regulate one's foreign relations.<sup>132</sup> However, China established diplomatic relationship with the ROK. This fact meant that a common enemy

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<sup>129</sup> Leon V. Sigal, *United State did not Intend to Cooperate* (Seoul: Social Critics, 1999), 85.

<sup>130</sup> Cho, "China's Alliance Policy," 182.

<sup>131</sup> Department of Unification, *Trend of North Korea* (Seoul: Department of Unification, 1992), 47.

<sup>132</sup> "Sino-North Korea Alliance Treaty,"

[http://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/china\\_dprk.htm](http://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/china_dprk.htm), (accessed September 11, 2010).

does not exist anymore between the PRC and DPRK—even while the DPRK still views the ROK as a threat and false regime. Sino-South Korea normalization implied that China did not consider alliance with the DPRK as major diplomatic determinant.

#### D. CONCLUSION

The transition of China’s foreign policies was enabled by geopolitical factors associated with the end of the Cold War. The PRC, through bilateral and multilateral processes, resolved disputes along its long borders with Russia and the former-Soviet republics. The end of bipolarity dissipated Pyongyang’s leverage in both Moscow and Beijing. Furthermore, the decisive Soviet tilt in the waning days of the Soviet Union toward Seoul provided an escape for the PRC from the entrapment of its one-Korea policy, or at least a convenient cover for the policy shift.<sup>133</sup>

Finally, with the ascendancy in 1978 of Deng Xiaoping as China’s paramount leader and then his inauguration of “an independent foreign policy line” in 1982, Beijing’s one-Korea policy began to be “de-ideologized.” China’s Korea policy began shifting from the familiar pro-Pyongyang one Korea policy, to a “one-Korea *de jure* / two-Koreas *de facto*” policy, and finally on 24 August 1992 to a policy of two-Koreas *de facto* and *de jure*, with the signing of a joint communiqué with South Korea.<sup>134</sup> With the end of the Cold War and Sino-South Korea Normalization, the PRC’s political and economic relations with the PRC have expanded vigorously and dramatically.

In addition, since Deng Xiaoping declared, “It is glorious to get rich,” China embraced free market economics. China has also tried to encourage its neighbor across the Yalu River to open to the outside world. Despite China’s effort to encourage an open policy within North Korea, the DPRK’s economy remains in a disastrous state. Moreover, the DPRK has even created some major security headaches. For China; and

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<sup>133</sup> Samuel S. Kim, “The Changing Role of China on the Korean Peninsula,” *International Journal of Korean Studies* 8, no.1 (Fall/Winter 2004): 81–84.

<sup>134</sup> Samuel S. Kim, “the Making of China’s Korea Policy in the Era of Reform,” in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, eds., David M. Lampton (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 371–408.

from China's standpoint, the nuclear threats by the DPRK toward the United States provided an excuse for (unwanted) U.S. troop deployments in the Korean peninsula.<sup>135</sup>

While Beijing still maintains its alliance and continues its substantial economic assistance to Pyongyang, in recent 20 years, many PRC and North Korean interests and goals appear to have grown increasingly incompatible. North Korea has remained insular, highly ideological and committed to what many find to be a virtually suicidal economic policy direction. China, on the other hand, has rejected its past excesses of ideological zeal to become a pragmatic, competitive, market-driven economy that increasingly is a major economic and political player in the international system.<sup>136</sup>

In brief, Sino-DPRK alliance seemed to have deteriorated on the grounds that changes in the international political environment as well as in Chinese domestic policy have caused friction with North Korea, which negatively affected the “Brotherhood” relationship between them.

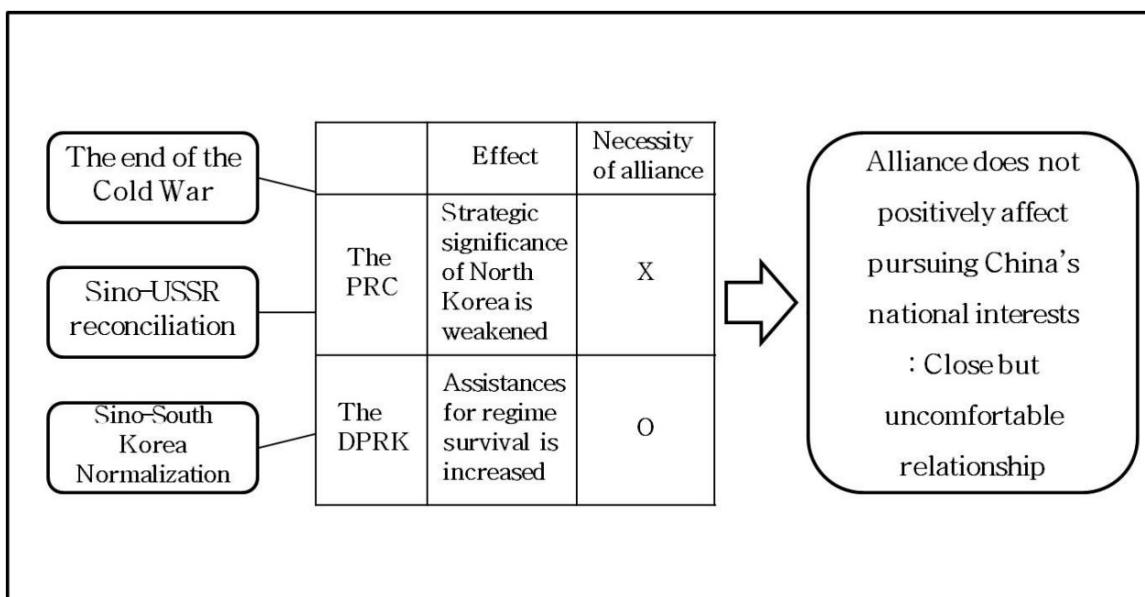


Figure 2. Changes in the Relationship Between the PRC-DPRK.

<sup>135</sup> Tamotsu Nakano, “A Grand Design for Northeast Asia,” *International Journal on World Peace* 20, no. 3 (September 2003): 30-31

<sup>136</sup> Nanto et al., “China-North Korea Relations,” 2.

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#### **IV. DURABILITIES OF THE ALLIACE BETWEEN THE PRC-DPRK**

The preceding chapter analyzed to the changes and adjustment factors in the alliance between the PRC and DPRK. Their relationship seemed to be transformed from “a blood-tied alliance” to “normal relations,” due to rapid changes in international politics and Beijing’s domestic policies. Beijing, however, has continued to support North Korea politically.

For example, recently, China supported North Korea’s stance toward the incident of the sinking of a South Korea naval ship in March 2010. Even though the United States and ROK demanded that China, as regionally responsible stake holder, clearly investigate the reason of sinking, China, nation with the most influence in the Northeast Asian region, had a noticeably tepid response and did not officially comment much about the results of the probe.<sup>137</sup> Cui Tiankai, China’s deputy foreign minister, called the sinking of the South Korean warship *Cheonan* “unfortunate” and did not acknowledge North Korea’s responsibility.<sup>138</sup> That is, China does not want to expand the effect of the accident through taking a harder line against North Korea. Such response highlights China’s special relationship with the DPRK. Beijing, as North Korea’s key partner and treaty ally, has kept the most leverage on Pyongyang of any world power. By maintaining the positive relationship with Pyongyang, China wants regional stability, the *status quo* of two Koreas, and peace in Northeast Asia in order to avoid hurt damage caused by North Korea, such as massive flood of refugees from, and to get more influence in the competition with the United States.<sup>139</sup>

In brief, Beijing still recognizes Pyongyang’s role as instrument to increase China’s national interests. In this context, in the following chapter I will carry out an

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<sup>137</sup> Namhun Cho, “the US-ROK Alliance and North Korea’s Respond,” *North Korea Economy Review*, (August 2010): 50.

<sup>138</sup> Jonathan Adams, “All Eyes on China in North Korea Torpedo Case,” *AOL News*, May 18, 2010, <http://www.aolnews.com/world/article/all-eyes-on-china-in-north-korea-torpedo-case/19484657>, (accessed October 10, 2010).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

analysis of what kind of factors have influence on China's stance toward the alliance with North Korea, from Beijing's national strategic objectives to the role of North Korea in embodying Beijing's objective. An examination of Beijing's perspective toward North Korea shows the PRC-DPRK alliance is recovered and developed as long as China gains its geopolitical interests of "North Korea's regime survival and reform."<sup>140</sup>

#### **A. CHINA'S NATIONAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE IN TERMS OF FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

After more than a century of struggle with economic weakness and political turmoil, China entered the twenty-first century as a rising power thanks to the progress of market-oriented economic reform.<sup>141</sup> China's rise has been seen as threat in some countries, like the United States. In addition, there have been some controversies over China's role in international society. Some scholars have been alarmed and argue that a rising China makes itself a threat to Asian and global security because it may upset the balance of power. In particular, neo-Conservatives in U.S. President George W. Bush's administration warned of the prospect of China as a great power to challenge American predominance in the post-Cold War world.<sup>142</sup> In the contrast to this view, other scholars have held that China is a conservative power and will seek to maintain the *status quo*.<sup>143</sup> Chinese leaders already know these perceptions of China. Therefore, they try to show the positive effects of its rising, namely, as the PRC capabilities increase, its intentions will become more benign and its reform and growing economic interactions with the capitalist world will make it more open and democratic, which will help to promote international stability and security. However, China's intentions are directly related to its real national strategic objectives, a powerful China, as a major force of stability, or a threat to international peace. But, in order to achieve its ultimate goal, China still lacks sufficient capability in terms of economy might and politics. Chinese leaders have recognized that

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<sup>140</sup> Changhee Park, "Geopolitical Interest Change and North Korea," 54

<sup>141</sup> Suisheng Zhao, *Chinses Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 3.

<sup>142</sup> Nicolas D. Kristof, "The Real Chinese Threat," *New York Times Magazine*, August 27, 1995, 50.

<sup>143</sup> Robert S. Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no.2 (March/April 1997): 34.

they are under many international and domestic constraints. Setting economic modernization as their top national objective, Chinese leaders have paid special attention to China's economic relations with other countries. A continued stress on high growth rates through a deepening of open door policy will remain the essential goal of Chinese domestic policy because the economic arena will constitute the main domain of international competition in the future.<sup>144</sup> Also, to embody its economic growth, stable environment is prerequisite.

In addition to economic issues, China's national objectives put a higher emphasis on hegemonic competition with the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, Chinese leaders have been confronting the United States on issues that China, as an emerging major power, wants to play a role in the world arena. Actually, Beijing stresses the search for strategic leverage and independence of action through the balancing and manipulation of economic, diplomatic, and military relations among both major and emerging powers.<sup>145</sup> But it still lacks an adequate material basis to do so. Therefore, China needs a stable status to improve its capabilities continually, while it keeps the United States from expanding its influence in international society.

Recently, however, China has increasingly challenged the United States interests and influenced the actions of smaller states, including those on the Korea peninsula.<sup>146</sup> In this respect, North Korea remains a good instrument for Beijing because North Korea could serve as an effective intermediary for China. Because of its economic aid and geographic proximity, China is an essential interlocutor with North Korea.<sup>147</sup> This fact makes China an important state with at least some influence or control toward North Korea; this allows China to maintain a long-term, if not predominant position in its Korean peninsula competition with the United States.

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<sup>144</sup> Michael D. Swaine, *China Domestic Change and Foreign Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: National Defense Research Institute, 1995), 82.

<sup>145</sup> Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2000), 114–121.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 98–104.

<sup>147</sup> Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US Primacy," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 64.

## 1. Implication of Pursuing Stable Economic Growth

The fundamental purposes of China's national strategy are to safeguard China's national territory and sovereignty, to guide national construction and social development, to ensure continued national prosperity, and to strengthen national power.<sup>148</sup> To achieve these national objectives, attainment of great power status in the economic realm is prerequisite. Moreover, the growth of the Chinese economy will help China establish international status and exercise its international role and influence.<sup>149</sup>

China's current development reflecting the contents and priorities of the Four Modernizations, the guiding principle of the reform effort inaugurated by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, is enormous. China is now the third largest economic power in the world.

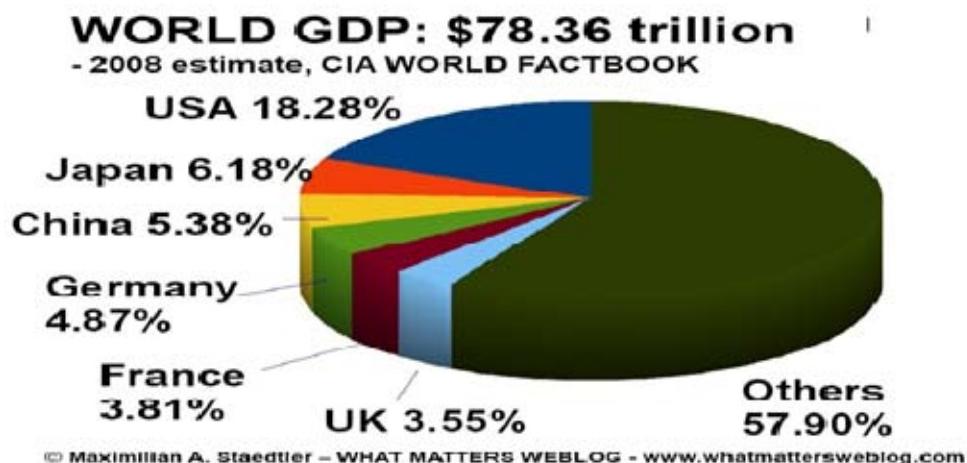


Figure 3. Distribution of World GDP (2008)<sup>150</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Pan Shiyi, *Reflections on Modern Strategy: Post Cold War Strategic Theory* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1993), 125–126.

<sup>149</sup> Eamonn Fingleton, *In the Jaws of the Dragon: America's Fate in the Coming era of Chinese Hegemony* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008), 301–303.

<sup>150</sup> “Share of World GDP by Country,” <http://www.whatmattersweblog.com/energy-charts/>, (Accessed October 13, 2010).

In addition, with the growing economic links between the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, China raises the prospect that the next 50 years will be China's period, which will completely control the economy of world.<sup>151</sup>

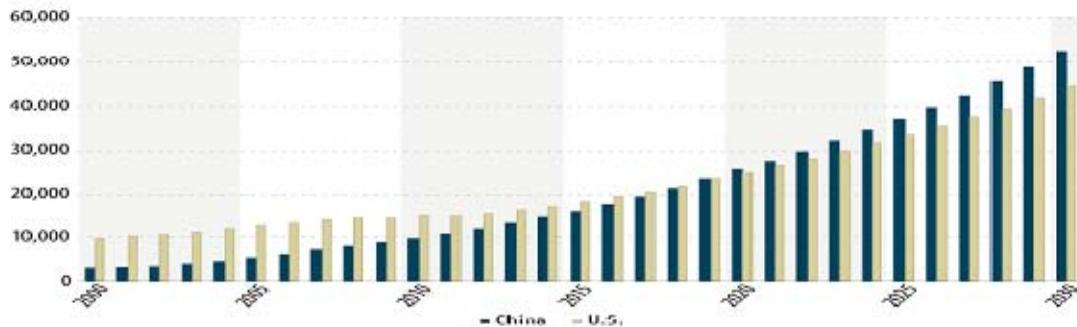


Figure 4. GDP on a PPP Basis for China and the United States, 2000–2008 and Projections Through 2030 (2008)<sup>152</sup>

Chinese leaders, however, still think they lack capability to compete with United States in economic arena. National per capita income is just over \$3,000; that is among the lower levels newly industrializing countries. China's GDP also is roughly 30 percent of the United States. Not only that, regionally unbalanced development and the gap between rich and poor are major factors creating frictions on the Chinese economy.<sup>153</sup>

Table 10. Comparisons of U.S. and Chinese GDP and Per Capita GDP in Nominal U.S. Dollars and PPP, 2008<sup>154</sup>

Country	Nominal GDP (\$, billions)	GDP in PPP (\$, billions)	Nominal Per Capita GDP	Per Capita GDP in PPP
United States	14,441	14,441	47,496	47,496
China	4,416	8,161	3,325	6,150

<sup>151</sup> Bomi Seo, "Emerging Countries will lead Global Economy," *Korean Economy Daily*, November 3, 2010, <http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2010110350731>, (accessed November 8, 2010).

<sup>152</sup> Wayne M. Morrison, "China's Economic Conditions," *Congress Research Service (CRS) Research for Congress*, RL33534 (December 2009): 8, [www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf), (accessed October 8, 2010).

<sup>153</sup> Jungrok Shin et al., "Neo China-Pax Americana: Economic Comparison between China and the US," *Chosun Ilbo*, October 1, 2009, [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2009/10/01/2009100100077.html?Dep0=chosunnews&Dep1=related&Dep2=related\\_all](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/10/01/2009100100077.html?Dep0=chosunnews&Dep1=related&Dep2=related_all), (accessed October 11, 2010).

<sup>154</sup> Morrison, "China's Economic Conditions," 7.

Therefore, in present situation, Beijing wants stable, sustained economic development. Economic power is closely related to securing national security objectives, such as securing territory and sovereignty. Eventually, economic power will contribute to building strong military capability which is an essential determinant for a state's authority. China's strategic dilemma, however, is compounded by ongoing developments in U.S. advanced technology and weapons acquisition and U.S. concentration of its overseas deployments in East Asia. These indicate that even if China should try to gain balance with U.S. power, the gap in military capabilities would, continue to grow. Even though China's military's budget has continued to increase at double-digit rates every year since 1993, the capabilities gap between the United States and China has not narrowed.<sup>155</sup>

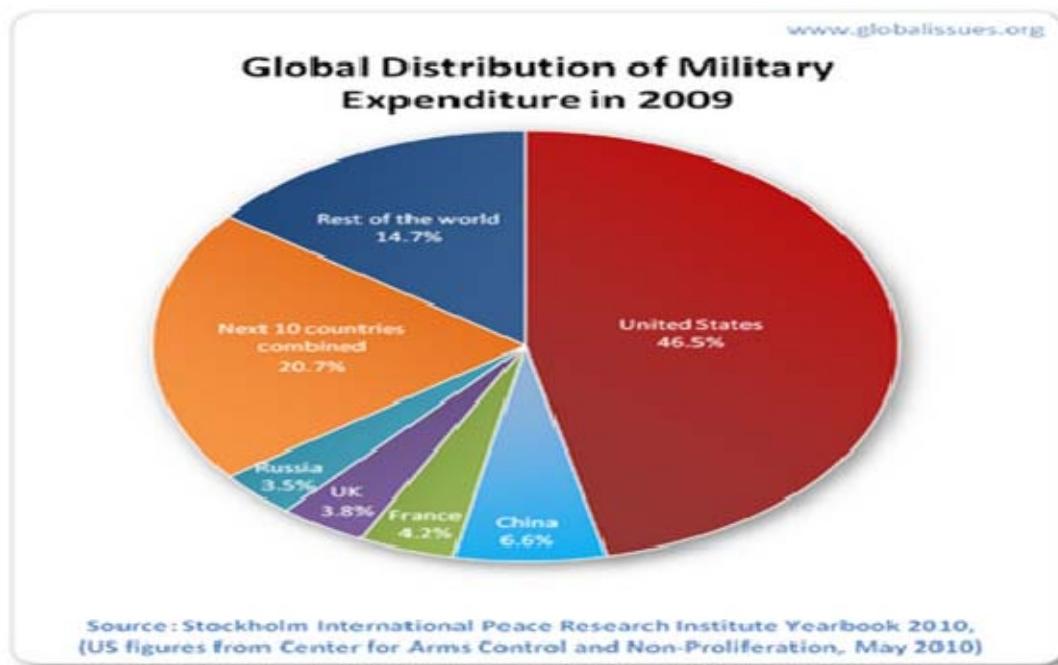


Figure 5. Global Distribution of Military Expenditure in 2009<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng, *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 40.

<sup>156</sup> Kent Ong, "World Military Spending and Poverty," *Current Issue* (2009), <http://honor2god.org/2009/07/29/world-military-spending-and-poverty/>, (accessed November 1, 2010).

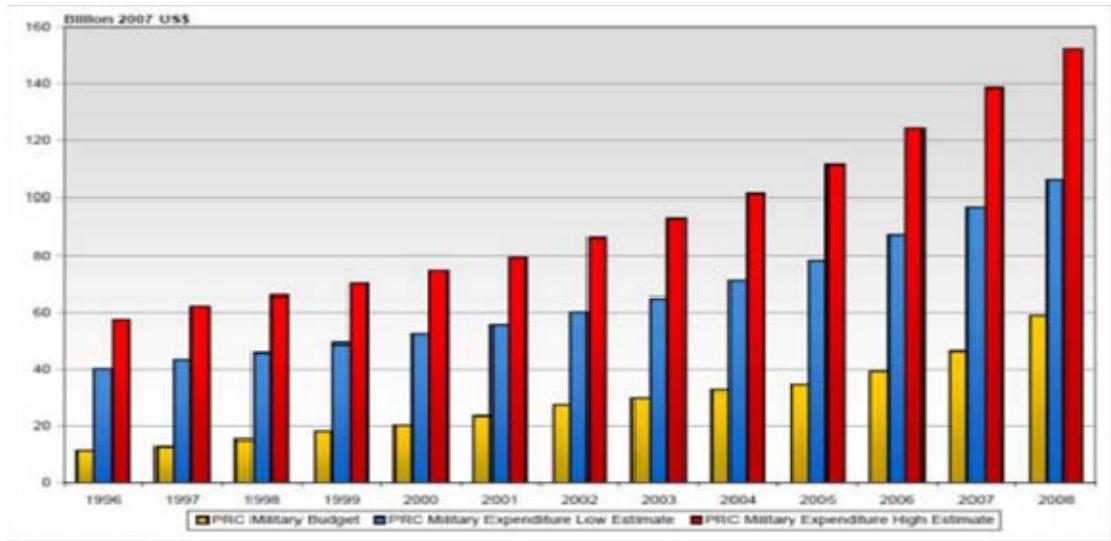


Figure 6. PRC Military Budget and Estimated Expenditure, 1996–2008 (\$, Billion)<sup>157</sup>

In view of the potential for a military conflict between the United States and China sometime in the future, over Taiwan or Korean peninsula issues, the PLA will continue to increase and enhance its operational capabilities.<sup>158</sup> For example, after the Taiwan crisis of early 1996, when China's decision to stage large-scale military exercises in the Strait of Taiwan during Taiwan's presidential election led the United States to deploy two aircraft carrier task forces to the region, the Chinese leadership finally worked hard to restore normality with Washington.<sup>159</sup> This implies that China still has a continued interest in its burgeoning trade and technology transfer relationship with the United States. Not only that, it seems to argue that China is not an emerging monster only focusing only on its own interests.

In brief, Chinese leaders recognize that China may be rising, but its rise is concurrent with the consolidation and expansion of American unipolarity, and China needs to enhance its fundamental economic structure in order to solve domestic economic imbalance and build other field abilities.

<sup>157</sup>Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009* (Washington: US Department of Defense, 2009), 32.

<sup>158</sup>C. Fred Bergsten et al., *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics), 191–205.

<sup>159</sup>Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, "China: The Coming Conflict with America," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no.2 (March/April 1997): 20.

## **2. Hegemonic Competition With the United States**

In spite of China's declared emphasis on peace and development and its avowed policy of befriending neighboring states in pursuit of a stable environment in which its Four Modernizations can proceed, the United States has a different view in approaching that emerging, giant state.<sup>160</sup> Actually, many in the United States state that the leadership in Beijing has set goals that are "contrary to American interests." Bernstein and Munro warned "driven by nationalist sentiment, a yearning to redeem the humiliations of the past, and the simple urge for international power, China is seeking to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia."<sup>161</sup>

Since the late 1980s, Beijing has come to see the United States not as a strategic partner, but as the chief obstacle to its own strategic ambitions.<sup>162</sup> In particular, the post Cold-War era and its rising economic power, spur China to shape a new regional order in Asia. China needed to diminish American leverage in Northeast Asia, because Japan and the United States, are building up a military force projection capability to contain China's front. This is an obstacle for Beijing and its desire to control South China and East China Sea, both regional essential sea-lanes<sup>163</sup>

The war games conducted by China after Lee Deng-Hui's visit to the United States in 1995 implied that China never gave up the use of force in order to secure its core interests. Moreover, some Chinese analysts express the view that American forces have no reason to remain on the Korean peninsula if tension were to be dissipated.<sup>164</sup> Except for shared common interests between the United States and China, such as containing North Korea's nuclear program, U.S. troop presence on the peninsula will likely be viewed by Beijing as a source of potential conflict. Therefore, when Korea finally is reunified, China will likely press for the withdrawal of American forces from

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<sup>160</sup> Lee Lai To, "East Asian Assessments of China's Security Policy," *International affairs* 73 (Summer 1997): 252.

<sup>161</sup> Christopher Marsh and June Teufel Dreyer, *U.S.-China relations in the twenty-first Century: policies, Prospects and Possibility* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Book, 2003), 69

<sup>162</sup> Bernstein and Munro, "China: The Coming Conflict with America," 18–32.

<sup>163</sup> Guoli Liu, *Chinese Foreign Policy in Transition* (New Jersey: New Brunswick, 2009) 152.

<sup>164</sup> Scobell, "China and North Korea," 282.

Northeast Asia. It will use its influence in Northeast Asia for two purposes, both of them inimical to American interests: to bring about a pro-Chinese, anti American and anti-Japanese stance in Korea, and to perpetuate Japan's status as a non normal country, one without the right to assume primary responsibility for its own defense.<sup>165</sup>

In terms of securing China's national interests, such as the Taiwan Straits and essential sea lanes issues, China does not want to be seen as a paper tiger.<sup>166</sup> Some analysts suggest that Beijing probably assesses that its approach to several issues that are related to the United States has a bearing on whether the international community considers China a threat or friend. Moreover, Chinese leaders do not want to be seen as interfering in the internal affairs of another sovereign country, a long-standing tenet of Chinese foreign policy that reflects its concern about other states meddling in its own affairs on issues like Taiwan and Tibet. On the other hand, Beijing also wants to make the United States look like a bullying hegemon in order to get benefits. In that way China can continue to nurture its own status in the region as an alternative to the United States power structure.<sup>167</sup>

Table 11. Determinants of Confrontation Between the United States and China<sup>168</sup>

	<b>The United States' perspective</b>	<b>The PRC's perspective</b>
<b>Taiwan Issue</b>	Principally supports China's "one China" policy Still supports Taiwan's defense	Taiwan issue is domestic political problem. Preclusion of U.S. intervention
<b>Human Right</b>	oppression in China	Internal Interference
<b>Missile Defense</b>	The way to secure U.S interests in Asia to prepare for threat of hostile countries	Hegemonic policy of the United States

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<sup>165</sup> Bonnie S. Glaser et al., "Responding to Change on the Korean Peninsula: Impediments to U.S.-South Korea-China Coordination," *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (May 2010): 17.

<sup>166</sup> Nicole E. Lewis, "Reassessing China's Role in North Korea," *Council On Foreign Relations*, June 22, 2010, [Http://www.cfr.org/publication/22482/reassessing\\_chinas\\_role\\_in\\_north\\_korea.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/22482/reassessing_chinas_role_in_north_korea.html), (accessed October 1, 2010).

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Taehwan Lee, *the Korean peninsula*, 124.

As China seeks to a dominant position in the region, and does not want to share the United States' view on global governance. China will try to alter existing rules and not allow the United States sole authority to define the limits of responsible sovereignty. China believes that it is entitled to reshape international arrangements to suit its own interests.<sup>169</sup>

China has realized itself as a center gravity in the modern world. Its traditional leverage on neighbors and its inherent power are connected with its eagerness to overcome humiliating history and to move forward a dominant position in Asia of Asian.<sup>170</sup> Its goals are to ensure that no country in the region will act without taking China's interests into prime consideration: to achieve the paramount status in Asia and to prevent any single country from gaining overwhelming power in Asia.<sup>171</sup> In brief, it is clear that China has not and will not allow the established influence of the United States, which has three times war had in the Asian region since 1950, to remain unchecked.

## B. NECESSITIES OF NORTH KOREA TO ACHIEVE CHINESE NATIONAL INTERESTS

On 25, October 2010, at the sixtieth anniversary of volunteer army entering the DPRK to help in the war resisting U.S. aggression, Vice President Xi Jinping said that the Chinese movement 60 years ago was “a great and just war for safeguarding peace and resisting aggression. It was also a great victory in the pursuit of world peace and human progress.”<sup>172</sup> Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said that Xi Jinping’s remark is China’s official stance toward the Korean War at the press conference on 28 October.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Stewart Patrick, “Irresponsible Stakeholders,” *Foreign Affairs* (November 2010): 3-10.

<sup>170</sup> Geoffrey Murray, *China: The Next Superpower: Dilemmas in Change and Continuity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 171.

<sup>171</sup> Bernstein and Munro, “China: The Coming Conflict with America,” 18–32.

<sup>172</sup> Mu Xuequan, “China commemorates 60th anniversary of participation in Korean War”, *Xinhua News*, October 26, 2010, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/26/c\\_13574898.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/26/c_13574898.htm), (accessed November 10, 2010).

<sup>173</sup> Kyunghwan Kim, “China announced its position regarding Xi Jinping’s remark,” *Voice of People*, October 29, 2010, <http://www.vop.co.kr/A00000332035.html>, (accessed November 13, 2010).

Kim Jongil also remarked on that October 25, 2010, in a friendly meeting with Guo Boxiong, Vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission that "the DPRK will always honor the feats of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) and will continue boosting the blood-forged bilateral friendship." Kim and Guo agreed that both countries should continue to build consolidating friendship in order to improve peaceful environment of development.<sup>174</sup>

In the context of such remarks, Beijing and Pyongyang still have positive relationship despite transitions in the international environment. In particular, recent issues such as the sinking of the South Korea warship "Cheonan" and visits to China regarding succession of authority to Kim Jongeun, reflect China's perspective toward North Korea. China thinks that North Korea is still closely linked to China's primary core interests, especially preventing the United States from expanding its leverage in the region in the name of deterring proliferation of nuclear weapons.

### **1. Maintaining Leverage in the Northeast Asia**

After mid 1990s, due to American "hegemonic" policy, China raised alerts toward the United States emerging as a superpower. In particular, U.S. foreign policies regarded China as potentially hostile country with beginning of Bush administration.<sup>175</sup> As the United States tried to strengthen its alliance with Japan, Beijing perceived serious security threat because strengthening of the US-Japan alliance would curtail China's diplomatic influence in Northeast Asia as well as accentuate the security burden in its eastern border region.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> "DPRK holds grand assembly to honor wartime Chinese volunteers," *Xinhua News*, October 26, 2010, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/26/c\\_13574892.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/26/c_13574892.htm), (accessed November 5, 2010); Kimyung Sung, "Kim Jongil said that Succession of friendship between the PRC and DPRK is my mission," *Joongang Ilbo*, October 26, 2010, [http://article.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.asp?total\\_id=4571804&cloc=rss%7Cnews%7Cglobal](http://article.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.asp?total_id=4571804&cloc=rss%7Cnews%7Cglobal), (accessed November 5, 2010).

<sup>175</sup> Michael Mastanduno, "Hegemonic Order, September 11, and the Consequences of the Bush Revolution," in the *United States and Northeast Asia: Debate, Issues, and New Order*, eds., G. John Ikenberry and Chungin Moon (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 274–275.

<sup>176</sup> EIU ViewsWire, "China's North Korean Dilemma," *Business Asia* (July 2009): 9.

To secure its leverage in the Northeast Asian region, China still needed to enhance its relations with the Korean peninsula. After Sino-South Korea normalization, relationship between China and South Korea developed by leaps and bounds. But as long as the U.S-South Korea's alliance exists, Sino-South Korea relationship will have limitation. For Beijing, therefore, this highlighted strategic value of North Korea, even today and encouraged China to expand its diplomatic leverage.

North Korea's strategic value actually has increased as Pyongyang developed its nuclear capability through testing since 1989. In response to international efforts at keeping North Korea from having nuclear capability, Pyongyang signed onto "Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" in December 1991.<sup>177</sup> In January 1992, Pyongyang also signed a Safeguards Agreement with IAEA (International Atomic Agency).<sup>178</sup> In spite of such agreements preventing North Korea from having nuclear weapons, Pyongyang denied the inspection of its nuclear facilities and seceded from Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993. This was first North Korea nuclear crisis.<sup>179</sup> This first nuclear crisis was resolved by consultation at Geneva in 1994 between the United States and North Korea. These talks resulted in a resolution which is known as "Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,"<sup>180</sup> In it North Korea pledged to freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear weapons program, in exchange for aid, energy development support and increased recognition.

Eventually, North Korea, however, still continued to make tension in the Korean peninsula. Moreover, in August 1998, Pyongyang fired a multistage rocket, Taepodong-1, stimulating concerns by the surrounding countries and the United States. As North Korea demonstrated an increased capability to develop and launch long-range missiles,

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<sup>177</sup> Chaejin Lee, *China and Korea*, 171.

<sup>178</sup> Kyungha Park, "Changes in Sino-North Korean Alliance and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," (Master's Theis, Yonsei University, 2008), 37.

<sup>179</sup> Subil Joo, *Compromise between Bush and Kim Jongil* (Seoul: Door Media, 2007) 23.

<sup>180</sup> "Agreed Framework," National Achieves & Record Services, <http://contents.archives.go.kr/next/content/listSubjectDescription.do?id=002954>, (accessed November 5, 2010).

North Korea was magnified as a more substantial threat. The reason Pyongyang focused on preparing deterrent capability was to assure its regime survival after Pyongyang witnessed regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>181</sup> Gradually, Second crisis of the Korean peninsula was resolved by process shown in Table 13.

Table 12. A Timeline on Nuclear Weapons Development in North Korea<sup>182</sup>

	<b>Major Events</b>
<b>August 31, 1998</b>	Launched long-range missile, Daepo-dong 1.
<b>November 17, 1998</b>	First round of high-level talks in Pyongyang
<b>May 25-28, 1999</b>	Former Defense Secretary William Perry visited North Korea
<b>September 13, 1999</b>	North Korea pledges to freeze testing of long-range missiles for the duration of negotiations to improve relations.
<b>September 17, 1999</b>	President Clinton agreed to the easing of economic sanctions
<b>October 16, 2002</b>	North Korea developed a secret nuclear weapons program
<b>January 7, 2003</b>	North Korea second withdrew from the NPT
<b>August 27-29, 2003</b>	First round of six party talks
<b>2004-2006</b>	Numeral six party talks
<b>January 5, 2006</b>	North Korea tested missiles, including a long-range Taepodong-2
<b>October 9, 2006</b>	North Korea announced that it had performed a successful underground nuclear test
<b>February 13, 2007</b>	North Korea signed agreement to freeze its nuclear program at 5th six party talks

The latest North Korea crisis occurred last year. First, in April 2009, North Korea reported that it succeeded in launching satellite. UN Security Council agreed on

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<sup>181</sup> “Launching Taepodong 1,” National Archive and Record Services, <http://contents.archives.go.kr/next/content/listSubjectDescription.do?id=003011&pageFlag=C>, (accessed October 28, 2010).

<sup>182</sup> “Special Report: The Nuclear Crisis-North Korea,” AtomicArchive.com, <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Reports/Northkorea/Timeline.shtml>, (accessed November 5, 2010).

resolution 1718 and strengthened sanction against North Korea.<sup>183</sup> Second, Pyongyang, additionally, declared that its second successful nuclear test completed was in May 2009.<sup>184</sup>

In the process of such consecutive crises, whether Pyongyang intended it or not, North Korea contributed to China's national security. First of all, while China cooperates with the United States regarding North Korea's nuclear issues, China has been able to focus on trying to gain getting concessions from the United States in terms of controversial issues, such as human rights. Secondly, North Korea's development of nuclear weapons could further restrict the U.S. military's room to take action in the Korean peninsula. This helps to constrain the range of U.S. policy choices toward China. Finally, for China, although any destabilizing action runs counter to its interests of economic development,<sup>185</sup> Pyongyang's provocations provide China with a needed environment to act in accordance with its role as a "responsible stakeholder." In particular, appearing to control North Korea by maintaining a positive relationship with Pyongyang enables Beijing to maximize its influence on the Korean peninsula as well as its leverage in Asia and with all the relevant parties in the Six Party talks.

When the United States faced its second North Korea crisis, Washington continued to insist that multilateral talks with Pyongyang involve other surrounding countries. The Bush administration asked China to exert its influence on North Korea. It is true that China has significant more influence on North Korea than any other country. Therefore, China could arrange its strategic priorities according to its national interests and improve its position in foreign relationships. China facilitated, hosted, and participated in the six-party talks.<sup>186</sup> In the six-party talks, China received considerable

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<sup>183</sup> Resolution 1718 called on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs and imposed sanctions on several types of activities. Mary Beth Nikitin et al., "North Korea's Second Nuclear Test: Implications of UN Security Council Resolution 1874," *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Research for Congress*, R40684 (April 2010): 19, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R40684.pdf>, (accessed November 8, 2010).

<sup>184</sup> "Policy Suggestion," *Korea National Strategy Institution*, no.147 (2009): 3, [http://knsi.org/knsi/admin/work/works/iss147\\_knsi\\_090703.pdf](http://knsi.org/knsi/admin/work/works/iss147_knsi_090703.pdf), (accessed November 5, 2010).

<sup>185</sup> Dingli, "North Korea's Strategic Significance to China," 20–22.

<sup>186</sup> PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Kong Quan, Press Conference, April 24, 2003.

credit for not only persuading North Korea to be more flexible on the issues, but also for getting the North Koreans to actually change. China persuaded North Korea become more open in its approach to dialogue with Washington. China seems to have become a more confident international actor, more willing to participate in both multilateral and bilateral settings.<sup>187</sup> But China only acted according to its strategic priority in the case of North Korea's nuclear action. In fact, prior to 2003, China had not taken an activist and leading role on the nuclear crisis. After China witnessed result of Iraq War and predicted consequences of a nuclear zed North Korea, leaders in Beijing seriously recognized the potential for an unstable environment on the Korean peninsula. A nuclear armed North Korea might trigger a desire in surrounding countries to develop their own nuclear deterrents and ballistic missile capabilities, spurring possible Japanese conventional rearmament as well as the U.S response providing robust security programs, including a missile defense program for U.S. friends and allies. Such proliferation of nuclear weapon states around China's periphery might cause severe problems when China is willing to defend its national interests competing with surrounding countries.

These factors were likely, or possibly the most likely, motivations for China to take an aggressive role in resolving nuclear crises. Regardless of the reasons, however, continuation of the Six-Party Talks process allows Beijing to expand its mediating role and offers it a potentially leading position. Also China's role in hosting the Six Party Talks creates a delicate balancing act for Beijing with respect to its relations with the DPRK. The Hong Kong media reported, "China succeeded in persuading the DPRK to join the six party talks. So being the organizer of the talks is in itself a winner."<sup>188</sup>

Both the United States and China want the North Korean nuclear program eliminated. But whereas Washington places a high priority on this objective, Beijing seeks above all to preserve cordial relations with Pyongyang. Beijing fully recognizes Pyongyang's security situation and its perception that it is completely surrounded by

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<sup>187</sup> Scobell, "China and North Korea," 11.

<sup>188</sup> Wang Dejun, "Special Dispatch: the Results of the Six-Party talks are better than Expected," *Hong Kong Ta Kung Pao*, August 20, 2003.

nuclear powers or countries under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. So Beijing believes that pushing North Korea into a corner would produce an unstable security environment.

Finally, China remains interested in maintaining the balance of power in the Korean peninsula and in playing the role of a mediator in an area that is strategically important to China's security. Beijing also thinks that maintaining status quo is better for China than a unified Korean peninsula under U.S. friendly regime. Consequently, Beijing focuses on its primary interests of stability and regime preservation in Pyongyang. This view could be found when it ensured that a UN Security Council resolution in July 2010 addressing the sinking of a South Korea naval vessel offered only a tepid condemnation, and failed to indict North Korea by name.<sup>189</sup> Beijing argued that China will oppose any movement that causes conflict in the region and suggested diplomatic settlement by conversation after result of investigation of sinking. Therefore, even though the United States requested China takes a responsible role, China never dealt with this problem because its relationship with North Korea was major determinant for expanding and maintaining China's leverage.

## **2. Securing Stable Environment for Economic Growth**

As China's strategic buffer zone, the DPRK is one essential determinant that allows China to concentrate upon economic development. In this context, instability on the Korean peninsula and the fallout of South Korea's economic performance would damage China's economic growth. Just as in the case of nuclear crisis, renewed confrontation would inevitably influence China's economic development. As PRC policy is focused on its own essential interests, reducing the level of confrontation on the Korean Peninsula would be the course of action that China's leaders would strive to achieve. This is why Beijing continues to assist Pyongyang economically and politically. The relevance between China's top priority objectives, economic development, and controlling North Korea is as follows.

First of all, instability caused by North Korea, such as nuclear crisis and low intensity conflict, has negative influence on security environment in Northeast Asia.

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<sup>189</sup> Patrick, "Irresponsible Stakeholders," 3–10.

While all provocations by North Korea did not thoroughly bring about severely destabilized situations, the threat by North Korea not only increase geopolitical risk, but also could develop or explode into a large-scale international that no regional party would seek to have develop. Therefore, whenever North Korea gives rise to provocations, surrounding countries typically make an effort to prevent it from expanding into a regional crisis.

Table 13. Major Provocations by North Korea (1990–2010)

	<b>Major Events</b>
<b>March, 1993</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Nuclear Crisis
<b>November 17, 1998</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Crisis
<b>June 15, 1999</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Naval Battle of West Sea
<b>June 15, 2002</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Naval Battle of West Sea
<b>October 16, 2002</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Crisis
<b>November 10, 2009</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Navel Battle of West Sea
<b>May 25, 2009</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Nuclear Crisis
<b>March 26, 2010</b>	Attacked South Korean naval vessel “Cheonan”
<b>November 23, 2010</b>	Artillery attack toward South Korean Yeonpyung Island.

In particular, such efforts deter Beijing from concentrating on developing its own priorities or objectives. Moreover, such provocation also serves as diplomatic burden for Beijing because, as the only country that may be able to exercise some measure of political control on North Korea, China has repeatedly been asked by the international community to prevent North Korea’s threat from escalating. For example, Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State, requested Beijing prevent possible North Korean provocation during G-20 Summit in Seoul.<sup>190</sup> Beijing, therefore, needs to maintain, a close relationship with North Korea to control and ameliorate North Korea’s indiscreet actions.

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<sup>190</sup>“Delivering Concern regarding North Korea would be last,” *Younhap News*, November 2, 2010, <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/international/2010/11/02/0601080100AKR20101102005900071.HTML>, (accessed November 5, 2010).

Secondly, economic cooperation with North Korea creates another dynamic that can improve China's economic growth. Since 2002, China's investment in North Korea has increased.<sup>191</sup>

Table 14. Chinese Investment in North Korea, 2003–2008 (\$, Million)<sup>192</sup>

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
FDI	1.12	14.23	6.50	11.06	18.40	41.23

China has invested in a wide variety of industries since 2002, especially underground resource and infrastructure.<sup>193</sup> Seventy percent of total Chinese investments in North Korea are put into resource development there, and Chinese investment was 80 percent of all resource development investment by foreign sources in North Korea.<sup>194</sup> According to the Hyundai Economy Institution, China invested 21.7 billion dollars in extraction of minerals in North Korea from 2004 to 2007.<sup>195</sup> Notwithstanding, China also has built infrastructure connecting North Korea and China since mid 2000s. Its purpose is to enhance economic connections with South Korea as well as the economic revitalization of the border region between China and North Korea. By spending roughly 23.7 billion dollars to construct transportation infrastructure in a connected development strategy with North Korea, China not has a foothold to take its economic capability to the next level.

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<sup>191</sup> Cheol Kim, "Analysis on Economic Cooperation between China and North Korea," *KDI North Korea Economy Review* (March 2008).

<sup>192</sup> "2008 Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment," accessed by November 1, 2010, [Http://hzs2.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/statistic/200909/20090906535723.html](http://hzs2.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/statistic/200909/20090906535723.html).

<sup>193</sup> Myungcheol Cho, "World Economy Update," *Korea Institute International Economic Policy*, (April 2007): 3.

<sup>194</sup> Hyundai Economy Institution, "Effects of Sino-North Korea Economic Cooperation," *Weekly Economic Review*, no. 372 (October 30, 2009).

<sup>195</sup> Haejung Lee, "Implication of Present Situation of Underground Resource Development in North Korea," *Hyundai Economic Institution* (2009): 3–5.

Table 15. Present Condition of North Korea's Infrastructure Plans by Chinese Investment (\$, Million)<sup>196</sup>

Region	North Korea's Infrastructure plans by Chinese Investment
<b>Development of Dandong-Sinuiju</b>	Building Dandong port industrial park and New Yalu River bridge Bidando economic specialized zone
<b>Development of Hunchun-Najin</b>	Hunchun-Nasun road, port, integration to build sea channel
<b>Development of Jian-Manpo</b>	Building a new bridge near existing railroad of the Yalu river
<b>Development of Mt Changbai</b>	Building tourism complex

An additional positive effect of investment is that China gradually can guide North Korea toward reforming its economic system. For Beijing, promoting economic stability in North Korea means stabilizing China's periphery. Beijing also expects that building Chinese-led economy would bring China favorable economic environment. Investments and assistances toward North Korea would increase North Korea's dependence on Chinese economy; that is, Chinese style capitalism and influx of consumer goods could have a potentially corrosive effect upon the level of control. It will allow China to take an advantageous position when China sets economic strategy regarding the Korean peninsula. Subordinate economic status of North Korea will be burden when South Korea assumes reunified country. Therefore, by expanding its economic relationship with North Korea, Beijing can take advantage of regional economic opportunities in pursuit of power and resources.

Finally, China is always concerned with the potential for North Korea's sudden collapse. Without peace on the periphery, Chinese stability and development cannot be guaranteed. Instability in North Korea, whether triggered by internal or external forces, would quickly destabilize the prosperity and development of China's northeastern provinces, causing Beijing to face tensions and confusion. First of all, Beijing would suffer from flood of refugees from North Korea. Shen Dingli, director of the Center of

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<sup>196</sup> “2008 Statistical Bulletin of China’s Outward Foreign Direct Investment,” Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China,  
[Http://hzs2.mofcom.gov.cn/article/statistic/200909/20090906535723.html](http://hzs2.mofcom.gov.cn/article/statistic/200909/20090906535723.html), (accessed November 1, 2010).

American Studies at Fudan University, writes, “The nightmare of Korean refugees pouring into China is not theoretical.”<sup>197</sup> In the mid-1990s when North Korea experienced a severe famine, tens and possibly hundreds of thousands of refugees flowed into China’s Yanbian Korean Autonomous Region.<sup>198</sup> In that case, China would have to use enormous economic resources to assure supplies of food and strengthen its border control. Not only that, depending on how China treated the refugees, Beijing would be evaluated as to whether it played a responsible role or not.<sup>199</sup> Secondly, if armed conflict between North and South Korea occurs, it also could force China into risking conflict between the United States and the PRC, which would be catastrophically disruptive to PRC economic and social interests. Finally, even if the Korean peninsula reunifies peacefully, the PRC will be put in the situation of facing U.S. troops and a democratic U.S. allying countries directly on its border without the benefit of a buffer zone.

Therefore, Beijing’s continuing economic assistance to and cooperation with North Korea could be part of securing China’s national interests. That’s because a more favorable security environment on the Korean peninsula would be more conducive to its own efforts to concentrate on China’s own four modernizations. Economic cooperation with North Korea in the name of traditional alliance assures China of a stable environment. So Beijing remits regularly to avoid paying the higher economic, political and national security cost of a North Korean collapse, war on the Peninsular, or the subsuming of the North into the South.

### C. CONCLUSION

China’s 1961 security treaty with the DPRK was a product of the Cold War and Sino-Soviet rivalry. In view of today’s international politics, China should revise the Sino-DPRK treaty because the alliance was formed in preparation for the attacks of mutual foe. In the Korean War, North Korea and China viewed the United States as the

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<sup>197</sup> Shen Dingli, “Cooperative Denuclearization toward North Korea,” *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (October 2009): 178.

<sup>198</sup> Drew Thompson, “Border Burdens: China’s Response to the Myanmar Refugee Crisis.” *China Security*, no.3 (2009): 17.

<sup>199</sup> Nanto et al., “China-North Korea Relations,” 6.

threat and formed the alliance to balance such a potential threat. In spite of the end of the Cold War and tremendous changes in the security environment, China still maintains a 1961 treaty, and the treaty still provides Beijing with benefits that control and constrain North Korea's military, as well as economic options. China does not seem too eager to change the status quo of the Korea peninsula.

Actually, from China's perspective, North Korea is a useful buffer zone that still contributes to their national security. Thus, China sees its military alliance with the DPRK as important, just as both Premier Zhou Enlai and People's Liberation Army commander in chief Marshal Zhu De used the metaphor of neighbors "as close as lips to teeth" to delineate the strategic importance of Korea to China as a buffer state against hostile external powers.<sup>200</sup> Therefore, China wants to adopt an objective and realistic role in the management of Korean issues and continues to support North Korea's regime to expand China's own influence. Beijing, indeed, has became a useful mediator between North and South Korea and served to de-escalate inter-Korean mistrust and tension. That's a way to guarantee stable security environment in Northeast Asia in the pursuit of constant economic growth in China as well as gaining leverage as a mediator.

Furthermore, Beijing believes that any changes in Korean peninsula could destabilize the delicate balance of power in Northeast Asia and complicate China's regional strategic posture. Viewed from the perspective of China's present policy priorities and steady economic growth, Korea's peace and stability are important. China continues to use North Korea in order to enhance its leverage in the region and improve its capability. By doing so, China is able to formulate its own favorable security environment to achieve its national objective.

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<sup>200</sup> Russel Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War against the U.S. in Korea, 1950–1951* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 62–63.

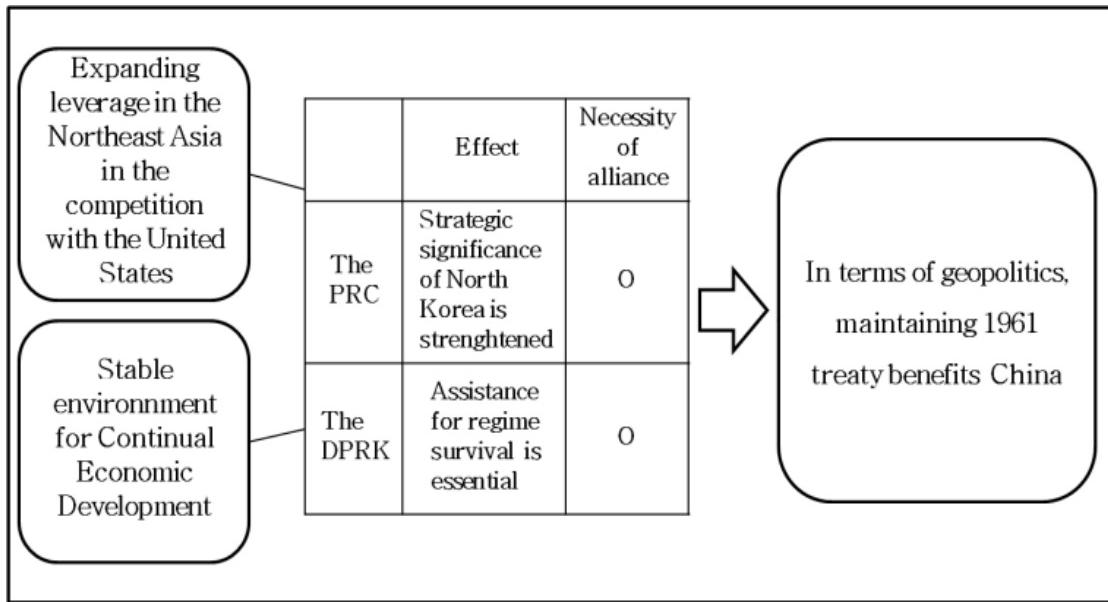


Figure 7. Durability of Relationship Between the PRC-DPRK

## V. CONCLUSION

This thesis has addressed China's perspective on North Korea's strategic value according to transitions in international environment and China's national interests. The PRC-DPRK alliance has lasted for more than a half century without revision. Numerous studies have predicted that the PRC-DPRK alliance does not serve as security alliance any more, due to the change of security threats. However, from a self-interest approach, Beijing still has a wide variety of reasons to maintain its alliance with Pyongyang.

By analyzing changes in China's external and internal security environment, this thesis finds that national interests play a significant role in maintaining the 1961 alliance treaty. The thesis was examined the national objective of China focusing on its political desire and economic development. A positive relationship with North Korea provides Beijing with considerable benefits.

In the PRC-DPRK alliance, Beijing and Pyongyang has shared geopolitical interests to assure both countries' survival. With Sino-Soviet split, the tense atmosphere of the Cold War, and common ideological identity, Beijing did not hesitate to cooperate with North Korea. Conversely, as long as enormous transition in world politics, such as Sino-Soviet reconciliation and the end of Cold War, as China participated in international society and Beijing decided to reform and open its economic system, it seemed that Beijing and Pyongyang have no shared security interests anymore. Beijing seemed to be reluctant to maintain the old style of friendship as long as Pyongyang continued to damage the PRC's interests. As a result, their relations were seen as changing from "a blood-tied alliance" to "normal relations."

However, as China's national objectives stay focused on its future, North Korea's strategic value have increased. Even though economic aid to North Korea is burden for China, and political support for North Korea places China in challenging circumstances, China seeks greater influence beyond simply a patron's role; it is becoming an active participant in a wide variety of international diplomatic and economic institutions and takes an economic priority in the Korean peninsula. From China's

strategic perspective, its traditional ties with North Korea are not worth maintaining, but North Korea still remains a good instrument to establish favorable environment for China to become the preeminent power and central provider of security in Northeast Asia.

Notwithstanding some limitations posed by the absence of detailed analysis, this thesis has two important implications. First, the 1961 alliance treaty between the PRC and DPRK has been affected more by national interest than by traditional bonds. Although the PRC-DPRK alliance was created on the basis of “sealed in blood” relations, their relationship has changed according to what kind of interests China needed. Second, although the PRC-DPRK alliance looks like a unilateral alliance for ensuring North Korea’s regime survival, China gets significant collateral benefits by maintaining that alliance with North Korea. Therefore, when it comes to security issues on the Korea peninsula, China will continue to seek to act as the most important player to guarantee its interests.

In brief, China will continue to support Pyongyang in order to control Pyongyang’s behavior. As long as North Korea has strategic value in Northeast Asia, China will emphasize its special relationship to promote its national interests and make best use of its historical position with North Korea.

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